

APPRECIATIVE VOICES ON LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation Submitted to the
College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine Graduate Students' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. The objective was to arrive at concepts of exemplary leadership that may be used to inform change strategies and create a framework for a student leadership development program. Responding to this issue required a methodological approach which was participatory, co-constructive, and dialogical. As a result, in order to adequately investigate the phenomena of leadership and leadership development from the participants' point of view, and to arrive at their perceptions of positive leadership, I used a qualitative case study which was conducted through an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process. The main data collection methods were individual and focus group appreciative interviews.

A sample of five Graduate Student Leaders from a university in a western Canadian province was used in this study. As the participants shared their perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences six key findings emerged. First, positive leadership experiences for the participants resided in the confluence of "being," "learning," and "doing." Leadership was a co-active process in which expressing emotions, receiving affirmations, acquiring new knowledge, and producing life affirming results acted as a force for elevated performance. Second, positive leadership experiences of the participants were framed around collective and interactive efforts to build interpersonal relationships in the community in which the leadership process was taking place. Third, the participants perceived leadership as an emotional process whereby leaders gain knowledge of followers' emotions through listening, appraising, and expressing authentic care. Fourth, the expression of emotions in leadership for the participants enhanced the leadership relationship and acted as an energizing and actualizing force in personal

development. Fifth, the participants viewed empathy as a fundamental leadership strength that yielded multiple interrelated benefits such as the facilitation of individual growth and social connections. Significantly, another interpretation that was gleaned from the data was that the industrial notion of leadership of the “man at the top” lingers and functions as a predictor of leadership success.

The participants’ conceptualizations of leadership development revealed two major findings. Primarily, leadership development is an interplay between self-development and institutional initiatives. Additionally, leadership development and self-development were inextricably embedded; understanding oneself as a leader involved the reflective process of understanding oneself as a person.

Consistent with the objective of this study, a framework for a leadership development program was proposed based on an incorporation of the perceptions of the Graduate Student Leaders’ most positive leadership experiences and their understanding of leadership development. The framework presented is accompanied by explanations of the choice of each concept within the framework and justification based on previous research findings, as well as excerpts from the participants’ responses.

Having taken an appreciative and positive approach to understanding Graduate Students’ leadership experiences I conclude that the concepts that emerged are powerful arguments for nurturing the student voice, and that there is much more to be discovered for the expression and framing of leadership in organizational life, academia, and the community. Furthermore, I submit that we need to deliberately engage appreciative processes so as to enhance our capacity to create leaders who articulate optimistic organizational relations and a deep appreciation of self and others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I stand I stand in awe of you. Holy God, to whom all praise is due I stand in awe of you.

John Fletcher, in his novel, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, stated that “angels, or something like them, sometimes live among us, hidden within our fellow human beings.” I must concur with John Fletcher because the individuals that guided me along this journey were truly angels. Each individual came along to offer help when I needed it most. They were all perfectly placed. Each individual had the right personality, the needed resource, and the words of encouragement, the skills, talents, and expertise that I needed to complete this journey. To my angels:

- Dr. Michelle Prytula - Thank you for your kind heart, your brilliance, your appreciative voice, and your unmatched supervision. The words you said to me when I met you first to discuss my reading course have contributed significantly to the beginning and the completion of this dissertation. When I had no idea what to do, and I sought your advice, you said to me, “Tell me a story.” Those words gave me the insight and the freedom to write what I really wanted to. Thank you Michelle.
- Professor Sheila Carr-Stewart - Thank you. Your leadership is exemplary. You are visible, compassionate, an active listener, and a woman of vision. I will never forget your kind words, your compassionate gestures, your motherly nature, and your welcoming heart. I truly appreciate your support, and thank you for the confidence you had in me when I completed lost confidence in myself.
- Dr. Debbie Pushor - Thank you for inviting me into your office. I felt so accepted when you opened your door and kindly welcomed in. Thank you for your appreciative voice, for the encouragement, and most all, for making me feel like I belong.

- Dr. Patrick Renihan – You are a leader to follow. Your personality, your expertise, your scholarship are insufficient to express who you are as a professor and a person. You are always present when I need to say something or nothing. You have such wisdom. Indeed you are a great teacher.
- Dr. Michael Cottrell – Thank you Michael for taking the time to listen and to provide critical feedback. You always invited me to sit and talk, even on your busiest days. The time you have invested in my development as a scholar is greatly appreciated.
- Dr. David Burgess – Thank you for all the encouragement and support that you gave me during the final months of this journey.
- My special friend, Yolanda Palmer – Oh, how much you endured, and you didn't have to. I will always remember this journey we took together. Thank you for kindness and your genuine spirit.
- My dearest, Rhona Williams – So far away, yet so near. Thank you for reading my drafts. I am so grateful for your friendship. You continue to awe me with your wisdom.
- Curline Watson-Lindo – Thank you for opening up your home to me and my family when we just arrived in Saskatoon. Your words of encouragement have given me the impetus to complete this dissertation.
- Sampson Twum, a dear friend, who took on the task of motivator when I was at my lowest in this journey. I thank you.
- Teddy Bandima, the most patient person I know. Thank you for sitting through my many mock defenses, for critical feedback, and positive affirmation.
-

- To Tracy Dollansky, a member of my cohort and my cheerleader. Just knowing you were right there with me made this journey bearable.
- I am deeply appreciative of the student leaders who formed the sample. Thank you for trusting me, and for openly expressing your experiences and perspectives.
- Thanks to all my family members who stood in the gap for me while I was away. I knew you were consistently praying for my strength.

And finally, to my husband, Chris, you have always, always allowed me to do what I wanted to do. Thank you for allowing me to “be.” You are indeed, the appreciative husband and my biggest fan.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Chrysali Renee Ingleton (six years old at the completion of this dissertation). Chrysali, no one felt it as much as you did. You watched Mommy do her homework night after night. You went to bed on the voluminous handouts, articles, and scraps of papers. You woke up to see Mommy focussed on the computer monitor. You felt the tiredness in your Mommy's arms. You felt the sadness of sacrificing your pillow fights and settling for one bed-time story per night, but my sweetheart, it was never about me. It was all about you. Now I can finally answer the question you asked me every night, "When are you going to finish your homework?" Mommy is done now. I am all yours.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Inquiry

Leadership is an evolutionary phenomenon; this is borne out in a review of the literature on leadership which suggests that the construct of leadership has shifted with the dawn of almost every decade. Historically, leadership has been framed through an industrial lens moving in stages from being hierarchical, power-based and productivity-driven to appropriating post-industrial features of transformation (Burns, 1978), collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Senge, 1990), relationships (Komives, Wagner & Associates, 2009; Rost 1991, 1993), and ethics (Ciulla, 1996). More recent voices echo notions of appreciative leadership (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Rader, 2010), emotional leadership (Goleman, 1995; Humphrey, 2002), and positive leadership (Cameron, 2008). Essentially, the leadership literature is marked by a multiplicity of perspectives, each with its own account of what leadership is or ought to be.

Up until the 1970s the industrialized notion of leadership dominated the literature and was the foundation upon which much research into leadership was constructed. Congruent with the hierarchical and linear notions of leadership, the participant sample that researchers used were also limited to select individuals, race and cultures. Additionally, the research methodology was almost always quantitative in nature, excluding the participants' experiences, their subjective viewpoints, and the ways in which they understood their worlds (Komives & Dugan, 2011; Rost, 1993; Rost & Barker, 2000). These criticisms, as well as shifting and changing societal demands, necessitated renewed conceptualizations of leadership.

Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership facilitated further research into the concept. As a result, other scholars have added to the conversation of leadership as relational, facilitative, interdependent, and service-oriented (Covey, 1998; Dugan, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977;

Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Miller, 1995; Senge, 1990; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Tichy & Devanna, 1990). The twentieth century is therefore classified as a period of enlightenment, evidenced by a radical shift away from individualistic and static concepts of leadership to dynamic and collaborative interpretations (Claes, 1999). The new interpretations of leadership have positioned the wider populace as leaders whose capacities can be developed through leadership education and leadership training. Leadership by its post-industrial definitional parameters is not limited to a position of authority but encompasses “the critically important civic work performed by those individual citizens who are actively engaged in making a positive difference in the society” (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 11). That is, any human being who is committed to social change regardless of physical or intellectual state in society is a potential leader.

Moreover, one of the most notable shifts in conceptions of leadership is that it involves a set of observable skills which can be taught, nurtured and enhanced. According to Gardner (1993) most of the capabilities evident within outstanding leaders can be learned. Importantly, though leadership can be learnt, how it is taught is dependent on the context and the generational forces that are involved. Gardner denoted that “[l]eaders cannot be thought of apart from the historic context in which they arise” (p. 1). Later, Headington (2001) related that each generation has to develop an understanding of leadership through its own experience and collective anchors. Importantly, the twenty first century landscape is demanding leaders who are not only responsive to change but also have the capacity to create change (Drucker, 2002). As such, the twenty first century has necessitated research on leadership from all angles, as leadership is increasingly being seen as a potential within any human being.

Background to the Inquiry

The fast-paced growth of organizations in the world requires more leaders who possess emotional maturity and spiritual wisdom (Astin & Astin, 2000), as well as those who are “equipped with the requisite skills and competencies to bring about positive change in society” (Ingleton, 2013, p. 219). Boyd (2011) stated that leadership education is needed at virtually every level of society “from youth to business executives” (para. 7). Gardner (1993) underscored the need for active leaders throughout all segments of society and estimated that need to be 1 percent of the population. Gardner further noted that experienced leaders must help to bring younger leaders along and that conditions must be created for young people to unearth their buried gifts and release their untapped energies. Currently, the call for leaders who are creative and innovative has been more compelling than ever before. Durham-Hynes (2009) expressed that the leaders who are desired in this era should be able to use their creativity in such a way that it helps an organization to realise its goals, as well as provide the organization with renewed vision or new ways of doing things. Given these demands, institutions of Higher Education are increasingly been viewed as ideal spaces to respond to the clarion call for leaders who can create positive social change (Astin, 1993; Astin & Astin, 2000; Carry, 2003).

Astin and Astin (2000) related that students are ultimately Higher Education’s most critical stakeholders. They make up the largest single constituency of any college or university. Reluctance by Higher Education to develop the leadership capacities of its students will account for an incalculable loss to society. According to Berg (2003) the university has the opportunity to influence students because of their current life stage. University students are individuals in transition, making decisions about careers and the direction for their lives (Berg, 2003). As such, institutions of Higher Education are deemed “vital and fertile holding environment[s]for

leadership learning among young adults” (Roberts, 2007, p.1). Given the expressed views that the responsibility for leadership development among students of Higher Education rests with the institution, there has been an increased emphasis on efforts in many colleges and universities in leadership education and training. In essence, college students’ capacities for leadership development have been a central focus for researchers and scholars on student leadership (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2009; Komives & Dugan, 2011).

The benefits to be derived from leadership development are invaluable. Research suggests that leadership education can contribute to higher rates of retention and graduation. Additionally, engagement in campus life can have a positive impact on students’ success and engagement in their academics (Astin 1993; Kuh, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Importantly, students with strong leadership foundation become leaders in their own academic fields (Osteen & Coburn, 2012). Accordingly, a comprehensive leadership development program may provide the knowledge and skills that students need to become nationally competitive (Osteen & Coburn, 2012).

In addition to the academic benefits, there are also personal benefits that may accrue from involvement in leadership development. Research indicates that leadership development can increase students’ self-confidence, communication, and interpersonal skills (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999), as well as prepare them for life beyond college (Osteen & Coburn, 2012). The study conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) (2000) showed that six of the top seven skills required by employers were leadership related. The skills listed were interpersonal skills, team work, verbal communication, analytical, communication skills, computer, and leadership. As a result, individuals, who are exposed to

leadership development, are more likely to have a competitive advantage in the workplace (Haber, 2011).

Besides the fact that employers are seeking competence in leadership, civil society has been looking to college students to provide the world with adaptive and creative solutions for the challenging issues with which it has been constantly confronted. This is based on the presupposition that creating better leaders is critical to building a better society. Gardiner (1994) stated that “our graduates will be central to solving every major social problem that faces us” (p. 3). Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) said that there is a need for a new generation of leaders who can bring about positive change in local, national, and international affairs. Astin and Astin (2000) declared that Higher Education should acknowledge the demanding challenges of leadership and intentionally and coherently conceptualize ways in which they can “produce future generations of transformative leaders” (p. 6). They further highlighted that Higher Education should “empower students by helping them develop those special talents and attitudes that will enable them to become effective social change agents” (p. 12). Leadership development is, therefore, critical to the college experience because of the potentially positive repercussive effects on the individual and society. It is not only an individual, but also an institutional challenge.

However, while the literature clearly identifies that leadership development among students of Higher Education is largely the institution’s responsibility, the context in which leadership development should take place and the constructs that should form the foundation of leadership development may not always be clear. This may be due, in part, to the nature of leadership, “a highly valued phenomenon that is very complex” (Northouse, 2007, p. 10). New research then, should seek to broaden the theoretical knowledge of this complex phenomenon by

focussing on underrepresented groups in the student population and their conceptualizations of leadership so as to create leadership development programs that are comprehensive and multifaceted.

Context of the Inquiry

While a brief review demonstrates that leadership has been well studied over the past decades, our knowledge base is never sufficient to keep pace with the current demands. Parks (2005) related that “[o]ur times call for a reconfigured understanding of the art of leadership” (p. 15). The changing nature of society and the growing interest for leadership in society necessitate more varied investigation into the phenomenon. Scholars and researchers in leadership and Higher Education have expended much effort into investigating student leadership; however, there still remain striking deficits in the literature. Primarily, there is insufficient evidence that student leadership has been adequately described from the students’ point of view. In other words, emphasizing the “inside out” perspective instead of the “outside in” perspective may provide more credible accounts of what student leadership ought to be. This kind of knowledge is critical to reconceptualising approaches to student leadership development (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007).

Importantly, Graduate Students’ perceptions of leadership have been underrepresented in the literature. Most research on leadership and leadership development in Higher Education focus on Undergraduate Students. Higher Education in its bid to meet its mandate of providing future leaders should care about and seek to examine the experience of *all* students. Therefore, exploring and extracting Graduate Students’ leadership perspectives provided one means of understanding leadership within Higher Education. Importantly, the values that Graduate Students place on leadership and how they conceptualize leadership development provided

remarkable insights into this particular group of students. It illuminated how Graduate Students' identify themselves, who and what matters to them and how they do things. The study of leadership within this given context opened up new possibilities for transformation and change. Continuous exclusion of such a rich group academically and experientially will leave the research largely untraveled.

Importantly, research on student leadership using an appreciative voice is sparse. I chose to be an appreciative scholar, a sculptor of conversation. I set out to give new voice to the mystery of leadership, not the problems of organizational life, but rather to search for aspirations that needed elaboration and attention. Approaching leadership from an appreciative viewpoint using elements of the Appreciative Inquiry approach uncovered and accentuated existing strengths, hopes and dreams, and identified and amplified the positive core of the leadership of the sample of Graduate Students Leaders in this study.

In sum, this study sought to address the recognition of the need for varied ways of understanding the phenomenon of leadership and for varied approaches to leadership development. Multifaceted interpretations of leadership are necessary to inform and give substance to student leadership development. Based on a literature review of student leadership and student leadership development, only a few studies focus on leadership from the students' perspectives and fewer still emphasize the positive experiences of student leaders. Moreover, the search for Graduate Students' perceptions of leadership yielded virtually no result. This dissertation addressed this deficit in the literature by focussing on leadership from an appreciative viewpoint using Graduate Students' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. The objective was to arrive at concepts of exemplary leadership that may be used to inform change strategies and create a framework for a student leadership development program. The key questions that guided this inquiry are:

- What are Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions and understandings of their most positive experiences in student leadership?
- How do Graduate Student Leaders conceptualize leadership development?
- How might Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of leadership and leadership development form the core of student leadership development and training?

Definitions

The following key terms were operationally defined for use in this study. They were applied as stated for the context of the study.

Higher Education. Higher Education refers to study beyond secondary education provided by a college or university. These institutions offer an advanced degree or diploma at the end of the course of study.

Graduate students. Graduate Students are students enrolled in a university or college in pursuit of an advanced academic degree (Master's or PhD degree).

Graduate Student Leaders. Graduate Student Leaders are defined as students enrolled in a university or college in pursuit of an advanced academic degree (Master's or PhD degree),

and who are currently directly involved in leadership and decision making for their student associations.

Leadership development. Leadership development refers to informal and unstructured activities as well as formal leadership programs that are designed to enhance and develop leadership capacities (Brungardt, 1997).

Leadership. Leadership is a collaborative process in which the leader and the follower share ideas and thoughts through various forums, and subsequently act in a collective manner to bring about change for the good of the whole.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Appreciative Inquiry is a method of inquiry which is participatory, co-constructive, and dialogical. It seeks to uncover the best of what is, what could be, and what should be. Appreciative Inquiry prizes and emphasizes the positives, and focuses on how positive states can be increased (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Leadership program. A formal program designed to develop or enhance individuals' leadership capacities.

Parameters of the Study

Patton (2002) noted that “[t]here are no perfect research designs” (p. 223). In congruence with this reality, this study has made no lofty claims or purported any conclusiveness in terms of the findings. The study has certain boundaries which include those set by the researcher to narrow the scope of the study as well as those conditions outside of the researcher's control. As such, this study is limited to the extent to which its findings can be generalized. Importantly, the nature of qualitative studies are not to achieve generalizability or replicability, rather to explore and examine the topic in-depth and in context so as to produce rich accounts of the phenomenon.

Consequently, the reader should take the following limitations into account when considering the study and its contributions.

1. The study was limited to Graduate Student Leaders who were elected members of their student organization, and had special responsibility for student governance in a university in a western Canadian province.
2. Only three of the four phases of the Appreciative Inquiry approach were used in this study. Focussing on the destiny phase was beyond the scope of this study due to the expressed purpose of the study and time constraints. However, the findings have provided rich insights into how such a program could be implemented. Future studies might consider incorporating the fourth phase, thereby expanding the theoretical base provided by this study.
3. This research focused exclusively on the best of *what is*, *what has been*, and *what might be* in Graduate Student leadership, rather than what is lacking. It therefore presented perspectives that enhance the leadership and leadership development process. Additionally, consistent with the post-industrial paradigm of leadership as relational and collaborative the aim of this study was to highlight the collective experience rather than the individual experiences of Graduate Student Leaders. During focussed group discussions and individual interviews the objective was to capture the wholeness or commonalities of the leadership experience. Though the individual experience was important, I chose to focus on leadership as a collective phenomenon.
4. The dependence on the honesty of the participants to reveal their true perceptions of leadership and leadership development limited the validity of the study.
5. The study was limited by the participants' perceptions of positive leadership experiences.

Assumptions

This research is premised on the following assumptions:

1. Graduate Students who are elected members of the executive are leaders.
2. The participants have the ability to recall and create positive images and narratives relevant to their leadership.
3. The perceptions of Graduate Student Leaders are valuable and necessary to create a leadership development program and to expand the base knowledge of leadership at the University.
4. The Graduate Students perceptions of leadership represent their reality at the time of investigation.

Significance

The significance of this research is that it provides interesting and illuminating insights into Graduate Students perceptions of leadership as well as offers significant contribution in the areas of methodology, theory, and practice in the field of leadership education and research.

Methodological significance. The use of Appreciative Inquiry processes in this study expands the methodological arena of research in leadership and leadership development. Appreciative Inquiry provided for a more relational process over traditional methods of research (Gergen & Gergen, 2000) which presuppose a more instrumentalist attitude, distinguishing or alienating the researcher from the researched. Instead of using participants to merely respond to research questions or explain the phenomenon, Appreciative Inquiry enabled the participants to uncover the most “life-centric” dreams for the future as a result of their engagement in dialogues

about strengths, capabilities, and resources. Employing the Appreciative Inquiry methodology resulted in participants benefitting from the experience.

Theoretical significance. Given the current state of the limited discussion and research into the positive core of student leadership this research narrows the gap that was frequently cited in the literature by researchers and practitioners in the field of student leadership. Theoretically, this study provides leadership educators with conceptualizations of leadership based on students' perceptions and students' experiences. These concepts can be used to formulate theories upon which leadership development programs may be constructed. Additionally, this research provides a theoretical model for future studies of the same nature.

Practical significance. In practice, student leadership researchers and scholars can find the results of this study of particular interest by examining the accounts and stories of how leadership in a student organization functions when it is at its best. Leadership program developers or student services administrators may use the results to make informed decisions in creating and launching leadership training activities or leadership development programs. Moreover, this research can offer the necessary inspiration, information, and starting point for more researchers to examine the Graduate Student population and their knowledge or perceptions of best practices for leadership and leadership development.

Additionally, more focussed research into the positive core of student leadership may provide space for designing programs that are in synergy with that positivity. Research that delves into the positive and strength-based aspect of student leadership may help student leaders to consciously construct better ways of leading their student organizations, and of developing themselves as leaders. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) observed that “[h]uman systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about” (p. 9). Therefore, research that seeks

to unearth the best of *what is*, *what has been* and *what might be* in student leadership development may prove catalytic in creating a promising cadre of future leaders.

The Conceptual Framework: Linking the Literature to the Study

A conceptual framework attempts to explain the relationship among concepts and provides a means to link ideas and data so that deeper connections can be revealed (Smyth, 2004). When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential as a tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher in making sense of subsequent findings. My conceptual framework, as diagrammed in Figure 1.1 guides the literature review as concepts mentioned are explored in more detail. It emphasizes that the leadership phenomenon has gone through rapid changes, from industrial constructs of leadership to post-industrial, to more recent configurations.

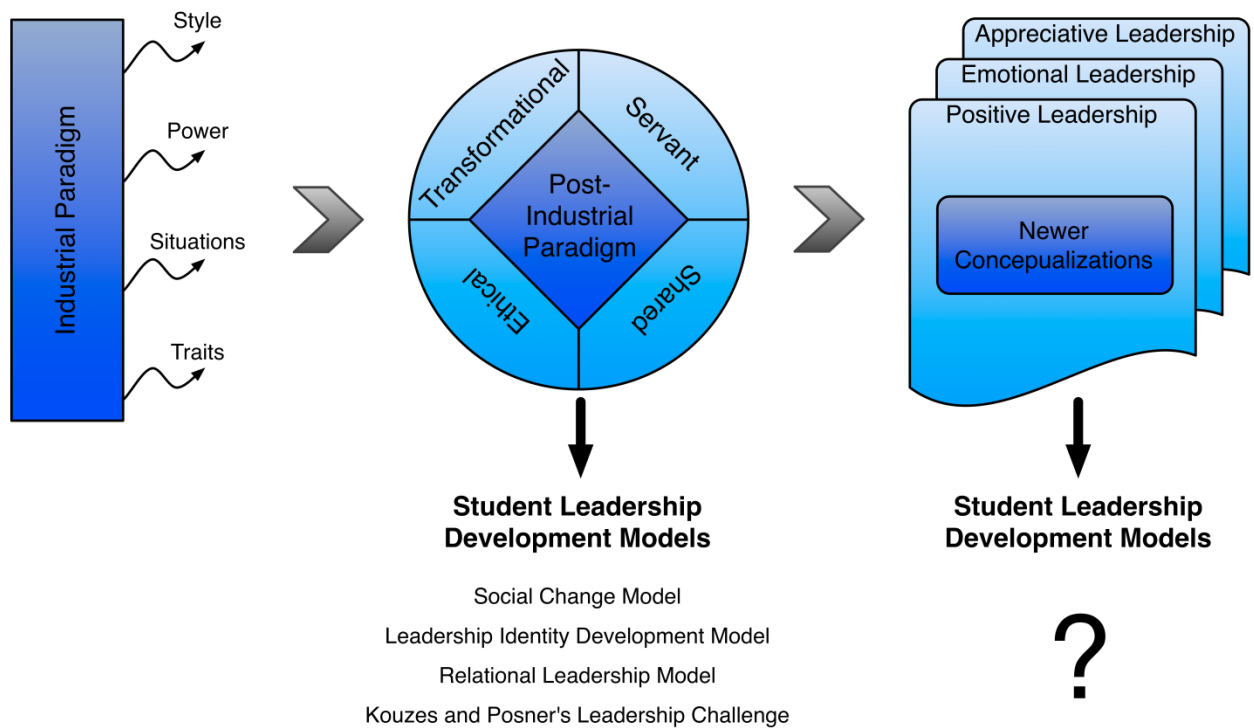


Figure 1.1: The conceptual framework: Leadership and student leadership development

Notably, as identified in the shape of the diagrams, the industrial notions of leadership are individualistic and static. The circular motion of the post-industrial paradigm of leadership suggests that it is dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive. Finally, the newer conceptualizations build on the previous concepts and reflect a relational capacity of interdependence and interconnectedness.

Importantly, the diagram indicates that the post-industrial paradigm of leadership has appropriated leadership constructs such as transformational leadership, shared leadership, ethical leadership, and servant-leadership. These constructs have influenced student leadership development in Higher Education. The student leadership development models that have been created that reflect these concepts include Kouzes and Posner's leadership challenge, Astin's and his colleagues' Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership, Komives and her colleagues' Leadership Identity Development (LID) model, and the Relational Leadership Model (RLM). These models were predicated on the notion that the particular lens through which leadership is viewed is a significant factor in how individuals develop as leaders.

The literature review also examines new conceptualizations of leadership such as those embedded within Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), and Emotional Intelligence (EI). As was stated previously, leaders cannot be thought of apart from the "historic context in which they arise" (Gardner, 1993, p. 1). I, therefore, argue that these new leadership constructs should lead to the creation of student leadership models consistent with the newer conceptualizations that emphasize the concepts relating to strength building elements in individuals and organizations such as humility, respectful encounters, integrity, positive affect, and empathy.

Positionality: The Researcher's Frame of Reference

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated that “your research is autobiographical in that some aspect of yourself is mirrored in the work you choose to pursue” (p. 178). Therefore, in order for the reader to understand the reasons behind the proposed methodology and topic choice, I will briefly outline my frame of reference and express my deep-rooted beliefs about the way I see individuals and the world. Firstly, my view of life is optimistic. I consciously choose to bracket negative experiences and focus on the positive aspects of my life and individuals around me. I am quite aware that problems exist, that is self-evident, but I have chosen to see the proverbial glass as half full instead of half empty. I chose to take a radically, positively deviant perspective. I chose to appreciate, to value, to prize, and to embrace the best of my story, as well as other people's stories.

In my academic and professional journeys, I have taken on leadership at various points. During my undergraduate education, I was afforded the amazing task as the representative for my dormitory on campus. Awed by such a task, (though I campaigned vigorously for it), I came up smack against the cold stone of reality. I was hardly able to hold on to the position I fought so hard for. Why was that? My genuine perspective on life was not a popular one, and I was too weak (at the time) to sell my vision to my team members. I was dubbed a “softy,” overly concerned for students who others thought needed to be “kicked out of” the dormitory” because they did not “participate enough.” But I saw participation from a different perspective, not the aggressive competitions and heartless battles in which students engaged in order to be recognized. I saw students who worked behind the scenes, who were genuinely engaged, and eager to make the dormitory a better living space. But those students were not noticed, understood, or appreciated, and I failed them. I was unable to represent them, to express who

they were, and to convince the committee that they were equally deserving of a space for their returning year.

In those final meetings, when I realised that those young ladies who were depending on me so much for accommodation were struck off the list...helpless, I plummeted. My true self surfaced. My deeply emotional capacity was awakened to the eyes of all the aggressors; I cried. Tears came streaming down my face, as I asked desperately to find a space for those girls. Eyes opened up in surprise. Some persons put their hands over their faces in an effort not to let loose their laughter. And I reconfirmed in myself why I worked so hard to project an aggressive stance. For a moment, I felt afraid, abandoned, and a little angry. For another moment still, I felt the need to permanently remove my mask of toughness and aggressiveness, but fear overcame the desire for authenticity.

However, as I expected, the news of my “emotional breakdown” spread all over the dormitory and across campus. I was subsequently considered “too weak;” leadership of the dormitory required a person with much more “strength” than I would ever have. I, therefore, did not opt to campaign for the position the next year because I was properly convinced that I would not be re-elected. I spent my final year as a student without being involved in any hype, any leadership position. It was a period of reflection, a period of slowly moving away the layers to reveal my true self...I was becoming who I was... and I liked it.

Years after that I experience, I took on a job as an educator in a high school. Much to my surprise, after three years, I was asked to be the Head of my department and to lead the body of student leaders in the school. When the principal asked me to do this, I felt out of control and weak, I could not shake the feeling that I was the wrong person for the job. I was a “softy,”

“happy go lucky,” “the excitable,” and “emotional teacher,” often criticised and misunderstood. I felt nothing like a leader was supposed to feel (or so I thought).

I started to conjure up images of myself crying in front of my teachers and my students. Oh No! Immediately, I started to suggest other people for the task. My principal listened, gave an appreciative comment for all the people I suggested, and in her kindly brogue, stated “Taneisha, you have just the personality for this task. You can do it.” That comment was contrary to the leadership I had so often witnessed. But there was a tinge of excitement...because I was implicitly asked to be myself.

In a little more than three months, I would no longer be the teacher who sat down and took instructions and moved swiftly to get my work done. I would no longer be the teacher who went to class and taught, chatted a little and left. I was now a person others looked to for directives, someone who had to actively teach students to lead. My “softness” and compassion became my strengths. Students cried, I cried with them. Teachers hurt, I hurt with them. Interestingly, my excitable nature became a motivation to students. I became someone they wanted to be around. Similarly, in some way, I was positively impacting the teachers under my charge. Teachers who normally stayed away from the department were spending more time in the department. That, for me, was a positive sign. I, therefore, spent my time as a head of department and head of student leadership with one primary goal in mind—to help students and teachers see the vitality in themselves.

As a result of my orientation, I did not want to engage in research that deals with the most pressing problems, gaps or root causes for failure. I wanted to focus on life-giving capacities. I believe that individuals and organizations have deep-rooted constructive capacity which, if allowed to be developed, can prove catalytic to both individual and organizational

development. How can this be achieved? The answer to that question is to focus on their strengths and align them to systems in synergy with those strengths, and staff their weakness. As a former Head of Department in my previous profession as an educator, I focussed on the strengths of my teachers, encouraged them to grow in what they do best, and to put their time, resources and energy into those areas. As an individual, when I communicate with people, I think about the best of what they have shared. As an educator, I see my students for what they can potentially do and scaffold their development from what they have done best. This for me is the *raison d'être* of leadership. My strengths-based approach to life is my motivation for choosing to take an appreciative approach to the study.

Second, I believe that people's views, voices and opinions should be valued, especially in matters that directly concern them. Designing systems, engaging in strategic planning, and doing assessments and evaluations can only prove transforming if the views and the perceptions of those involved are taken into account. Otherwise, one may end up with a disconnection between the policy developed and the practice of the individuals within the organization. As a teacher for ten years with special responsibility for student leadership I have witnessed how inviting and valuing students' voices when constructing something for them have given them ownership; ultimately they feel valued and are more inclined to participate. I have, therefore, concluded that people support what they help to create. As a result, I believe that if one wants to create transformative change in any human system, getting the insider's perspective is crucial. My overarching perspective, can therefore, be summarised as a positive approach to the subjective nature of human understanding.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter provides the context of inquiry, background to the inquiry, purpose, and significance of the inquiry, as well as limitations. Embedded in this chapter is also a description of terms, conceptual descriptors, the researcher's positionality, and an overview of the study's organization. Chapter Two reviews the literature through a synthesis of post-industrial models of leadership, as well as leadership constructs that arose from Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), and Emotional Intelligence (EI). Chapter Two concludes with a discussion of student leadership and student leadership development in Higher Education. Chapter Three describes the research design used to explore Graduate Students' leadership perceptions, and includes a discussion on the qualitative case study methodology with elements of Appreciative Inquiry. Furthermore, it provides a description of the participants, the data collection and analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and issues related to trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis and highlights the students' leadership perceptions that emerged from the data. Chapter Five further examines the perceptions of leadership as represented by the students and presents an interpretation of these perceptions. Chapter Six presents a framework for a leadership development program based on an incorporation of the perceptions of the participants' most positive leadership experiences, and their understanding of leadership development. Finally, Chapter Seven reports the methodological reflections, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Burns (1978) related that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomenon on earth” (p. 9). The struggle to understand such an intriguing expression of human behaviour has led to a proliferation of theories and perspectives over the centuries. Theoretical explanations have moved from one model to the next, each highlighting the shortcomings of the other while building on their strengths in an effort to create a more comprehensive perspective (Brungardt, 1997; Komives & Dugan, 2011). Bass’ (1990) latest edition of the *Handbook of Leadership* documents over 4000 studies on leadership prior to 1981 (Brungardt, 1997). In addition to Bass’ extensive research, Rost’s (1991) study of leadership records approximately 8,000 citations and references showing a significant increase in the number of published articles and books on the concept (Brungardt, 1997). However, regardless of the existing and growing scholarship, more disagreement than consensus on the concept of leadership appears to emerge. Stogdill (1974) concluded that “the endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership” (p. vii). Still, in later years scholars lament that the leadership concept remains inconsistent, contradictory, and paradoxical (Barker, 1997; Klenke, 1993).

The scholarly frustration and the growing number of research and literature in leadership, though positive, create difficulty for the leadership education and leadership development of future leaders. The recent establishment of student leadership as a distinct scholarly field is one such avenue that may be affected by definitional or theoretical approaches to leadership that may have

been effective for past centuries “premised on physical production” (Rost, 1993; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Rost (1993) pointed out that students who are enrolled in professional development and leadership classes will be doing most of their leadership in the twenty first century and so should be taught the concept of leadership that will operate in the twenty first century. As a result, the process of student leadership development should be influenced by interventions that teach beyond traditionally accepted views of leadership since the context in which leaders operate is both radically different and diverse (Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002, p. 798).

Consequently, this literature review will allow an exploration of the conceptualizations of leadership that came to prominence in the post-industrial era and examines the efforts that have been expended in leadership education/development during this era. More specifically, the literature review is divided into three parts. Part One examines the relational approach to leadership that came to prominence in the post-industrial era. Part Two relates the more recent leadership ventures that are currently defining the social atmosphere of individuals, communities, and organizations. Part Three discusses student leadership development in Higher Education and student leadership development models that have been constructed that are consistent with the views of twenty first century leadership. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion for the possibility of student leadership development models that are complementary to the newer leadership trends.

The exhaustive scope of the literature on leadership precludes a detailed discussion on all the concepts. As such, only leadership concepts that have been spotlighted as mainstream to the twenty first leadership literature are discussed. Findings from empirical research and hypotheses from theoretical papers are summarized.

Part One

The Emergence of Post-Industrial Leadership Constructs

Rost (1991) related that leadership theories can be categorized into two distinct theoretical paradigms: Industrial and Post-industrial. The industrial concepts of leadership are rooted in theories that advocate trait, behavioural, situational, and power-influence. Within this paradigm leadership is leader centric; it is an isolated activity centered on selected individuals, and is results-oriented. It is focussed on characteristics or demographics such as age, appearance or personal characteristics as qualities for leader emergence and leader effectiveness. Extensive research on the theories of traits, behaviours, situations, and power-influence as predictors of leadership success has suggested that such theories are lacking in empirical support and comprising conceptual weaknesses. Contemporary definitions of leadership are focused on a much more complex concept that goes beyond traits, situations, power, or style. The idea of the leader as “lone ranger” is a concept that is opposed to contemporary definitions of leadership. In fact, today, the phenomenon of leadership encompasses the idea of multiple leaders in a given situation (Pearce & Conger, 2003), interactions or relationships among individuals (Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Rost, 1991), and a focus on the needs of all involved in the leadership process (Greenleaf, 1977).

In response to the exigencies of the twenty first century, scholars such as Burns (1978) Rost (1991) advocated for a more relational approach to leadership. Burns’ (1978) and Rost’s (1991) scholarly work were influential in repositioning leadership as a relational and reciprocal process and in emphasizing the view of leading beyond self. Their definitions of leadership are consistent with the type of leadership needed in the twenty first century society: democratic, mutually shaping, and empowering. Hence, leadership models in the post-industrial era resemble

a “web of inclusion,” depicting an architectural form more circular than hierarchical (Bolman & Deal; 2008; Helgesen, 1995). This definitive shift is reflected in Figure 2. 1.

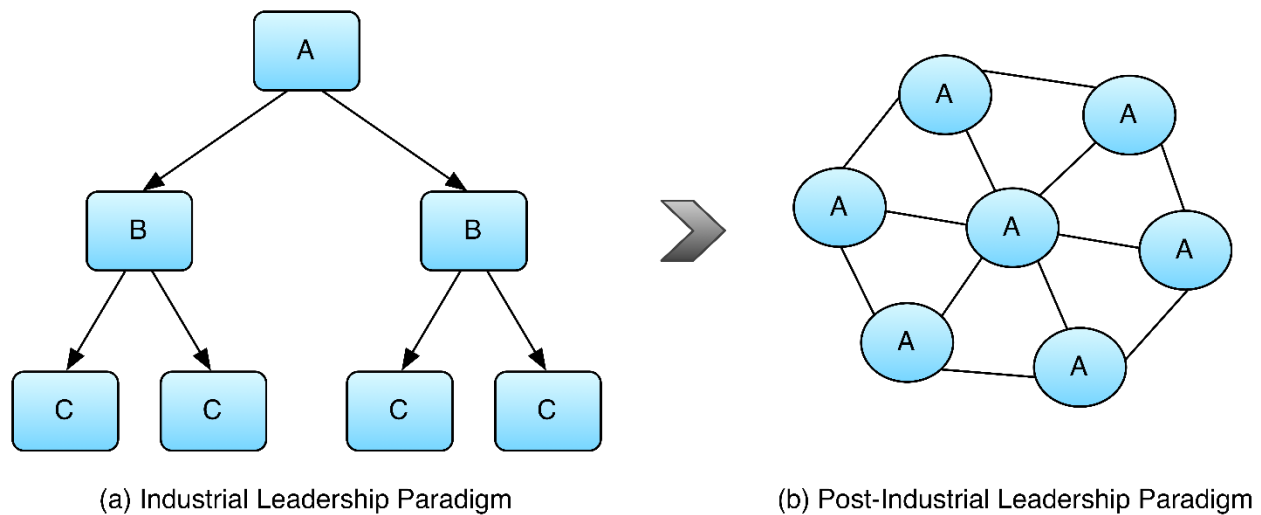


Figure 2.1: The paradigm shift of leadership: From industrial to post-industrial. Inspired by Berg (2003) and Helgensen (1995)

The post-industrial paradigm is focussed largely on the collaborative effort of the leaders and the followers in a mutually influential relationship “aimed at change for the common good” (Komives & Dugan, 2011, p. 40). Hirschhorn (1990) concluded that the need for leaders and their subordinates to recognize their dependence on each other is perhaps the greatest demand in the post-industrial milieu. The leader which is “A” no longer charts the organization with subordinates “B” and “C” lined up to do the bidding; rather everyone takes a leadership role, exercising community, collegiality, and shared decision-making.

In Helgensen’s (1995) account of organizations as a web of inclusion, organizations are led from the center and non-positional forms of power are honoured. The relationships among colleagues are inclusive and leaders are able to draw from a wide array of talents. Operating like a web is more efficient to foster honest communication, transparency, and inclusivity. In the top

down structure, communication is unidirectional. The leader, “A,” comes up with the ideas and the subordinates, “B” and “C,” are expected to execute them. There is a clear division and hierarchy of influence. In the web-like structure there is a flow of creativity. Ideas can come from anywhere in the organization and people are in touch directly with the leader. Each individual is seen as leader and there is a firm sense of participation in the leadership process (Helgensen, 1995). The diagram, therefore, reflects that the post-industrial paradigm of leadership is predicated on a relational focus of leadership rather than the leader-centric, authority-oriented perspectives that defined the industrial era. The post-industrial paradigm is focussed on leadership theories that emphasize reciprocal relationships, service, and moral outcomes. It is reflective, transforming, and reforming (Northouse, 2007).

The post-industrial construct of leadership is rooted in the notion that leadership is a socially constructed reality (Rost & Baker, 2000). It is in a constant state of reconstruction in order to serve the needs of the current reality of individuals rather than those of organizations or executives in organizations. In other words, post-industrial leadership must be inclusive, focussing on the common good and it must incorporate “the complexities of social processes and the pluralistic nature of global society” (Rost & Barker, 2000, p. 5). A model of post-industrial leadership emphasizes “consensus, client-orientation, civic virtues, and freedom of expression” (Rost & Barker, 2000, p. 5). It takes a multi-disciplinary perspective and its methods of evaluation are preferably qualitative rather than quantitative in nature (Brungardt, 1997; Rost, 2000; Rost, 1991).

In sum, the post-industrial paradigm of leadership harnesses people’s strengths, expertise, and abilities. Responsibilities are shared and successes, as well as failures are owned and experienced by all involved in the leadership process rather than by a solitary person. Consistent

with the exigencies of the twenty first century, authoritarianism and hierarchical forms of leadership have shifted to a more lateral process. Indeed, the “We” identity has more significance than the “I” identity in the post-industrial era.

Transformational Leadership: The Catalyst to Scholarly Change

Burns’ (1978) theory of leadership resituated leadership from the old industrial era model that was characterized by leader at the top and followers beneath to a model that was not only transforming and collaborative, but also moral. Burns contended that though leadership involves power it is not about power. It is instead “relational, collective, and purposeful” (p. 18). It does not emphasize authority and control. It recognizes the importance of the followers, as well as their goals. Succinctly, leadership is a significant relationship between leaders and followers that is based on mutual influence between both parties (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1993). Essentially, the transformational view of leadership dictates that “the function of leadership is to engage followers, not merely to activate them, to commingle needs and aspirations and goals in a common enterprise and in the process make better citizens of both leaders and followers” (Burns, 1978, p. 461).

Burns’ (1978) transformational leadership theory makes a stark distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. He described transformational leadership as a mutually beneficial process and defined transactional leadership as an exchange based process of leadership. More specifically, transactional leaders approach “followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another” (p. 4), while transformational leaders seek “to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). According to Burns “leadership is nothing if not linked to collective purposes” (p. 3). Leadership is transformational when

individuals engage with each other in such a way that together they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978).

Burns' (1978) enlightening model of transformational leadership created a major shift in the thinking behind how leadership was perceived. His concept is reflected in a number of scholars' proposed leadership models for the twenty first century. Scholars such as Bennis and Nanus (1985), Kouzes and Posner (2008), and Tichy and Devana (1990) created models that were consistent with Burns' approach. Their models are centered on the leader's ability to create a compelling vision and to inspire people to achieve more than their perceived capacity.

Transformational leadership has also been adopted in the educational leadership context. Sergiovanni and Starrat (1998) concluded that transformational leadership "involves an exchange among people seeking common aims, uniting them to go beyond their separate interests in the pursuit of higher goals" (p. 198). Later, Northouse (2010) related that transformational leadership is how a "leader can initiate, develop and carry out change in an organization" (p. 185). Burns' concept revolutionized the scholarly field of leadership research, making it more inclusive and incorporating marginalized groups, women, and people of colour (Komives & Dugan, 2011).

Servant-Leadership: Leading Beyond Self

Servant-leadership as a post-industrial concept is one of the least critically examined philosophies of leadership (Barbuto, 2007). It emphasizes leadership as service, values, and civic engagement. Servant-leadership is less about control, as exhibited in the bureaucratic framework, and more about collaboration, communication, and camaraderie. Greenleaf (1977) coined the phrase "servant-leadership" which was inspired by his involvement with schools and universities and his interaction with student leaders (Arkin, 2004). The concept of servant-

leadership emerged in response to Greenleaf's concerns for student leadership development and his need to "understand the nature of their concerns" (Dittmar, 2006, p. 115). However, today, servant-leadership has extended to other organizations and "increasingly has a global face" (Dittmar, 2006, p. 117) due to its emphasis on the moral sense of concern for others.

Servant-leadership is conceptually related to transformational leadership in that the servant leader helps the follower to be more autonomous and knowledgeable and, in so doing, elevates the level of the follower's moral consciousness. In this regard, servant leaders view people as the highest priority, revelling in serving others instead of being served (Greenleaf, 1998). This commitment to the highest order of service is what authors including Spears, President and CEO of the Greenleaf Centre, coined as stewardship, "first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others" (Spears & Lawrence, 2002, p. 15).

Covey (1998) outlined that "the servant-leadership concept is a principle, a natural law, and getting our social value systems and personal habits aligned with this ennobling principle is one of the great challenges of our lives" (p. xiv). The servant-leadership model shifts our thinking from authority and control to that of character building and empowerment (Covey, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 1990). Greenleaf (1998) focussed on eleven characteristics that define a servant leader. These are: (a) having a calling; (b) listening; (c) empathy; (d) healing; (e) awareness; (f) persuasion; (g) conceptualization; (h) foresight; (i) stewardship; (j) growth; and (k) community building. The ultimate servant leader possesses these characteristics and continues to grow in different stages with each of these characteristics. Greenleaf's (1977) vision of servant-leadership is geared towards articulating a vision. In the process of vision creation and sharing, followers are enabled, ennobled, and empowered to work towards attaining that vision.

As twenty first century scholars search for a more refined and refocused vision of leadership than the unemotional and decisive industrial models, servant-leadership with its ideals of service before self, trust and a mutually influential relationship, provides a fresh and inspiring perspective to a discussion that seems to be spiralling in on itself (Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears & Lawrence, 2002).

Shared Leadership: The Move towards Teamwork

Pearce and Conger (2003) defined shared leadership as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (p.1). The difference between shared leadership and traditional models is that leadership is distributed among various individuals rather than centralized in the hands of single individuals acting in roles such as supervisors (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Pearce and Conger related that shared leadership allows individuals who are not appointed in any position as a leader to act in such a position when the situation demands and respectfully step back at other times to allow others to lead. In essence, in shared leadership there is a continuous emergence of official and unofficial leaders (Pearce, 2004). Other scholars such as Day, Gronn, and Salas (2004) regarded shared leadership as a team level outcome. In this regard, leadership is defined as “a property of the whole system, as opposed to solely the property of individuals, effectiveness in leadership becomes more a product of those connections or relationships among the parts than the result of any one part of that system such as the leader” (O’Connor & Quinn, 2004, p. 423).

Though there are only a small number of publications on shared leadership, the phenomenon is a growing demand in organizations that have cross-functional teams. In such organizations, though there is an appointed leader, he or she is often treated as a peer, as the

formal leader's expertise only represents a fraction of the multiple talents and skills that are sitting at the table (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

The concept of shared leadership was first introduced by Follett (1927), whose belief of leadership in organizations was that the situation and not the individual should determine the orders. Follett's philosophy was one that advocated lateral processes within organizations. She emphasized the authority of expertise over the authority of positions and the importance of unlocking the extraordinary vision and talents in individuals. In expressing the concept of shared leadership, Follett (1927) indicated "that the leader has not always the largest share in decision-making, and yet he may not thereby be any less the leader" (p. 257). That is, the leader is highly dependent on the knowledge of the other team members. As a result, there might be various times within the team when leadership has to be distributed across the team members to allow for people with different perspectives and backgrounds to take the leadership role. This kind of leadership is taking prominence in the field of education. Scholars in the field of education argue for shared/distributed/parallel leadership in schools because of its democratic and collaborative approach (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hann, 2002; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Lambert, 2002).

Ethical Leadership: A Focus on Integrity

Ethical leadership is not a novel construct but has gained increased relevance in the post-industrial era. As a result of the public concern for the prominent ethical scandals in virtually every organization, the field of leadership has become the object of intensive scrutiny (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The collapse of organizations such as Enron, which was, due in part, to unethical behaviour has caused numerous organizations to suffer financial loss in the global market place and engendered distrust in financial institutions (Thompson, Thach & Morelli,

2010). As a result, the demand for the moral literacy of leaders, defined by a commitment to integrity, trust, human dignity, and respect is perhaps the most pervasive trend in the recent post-industrial era. Ciulla (1996) stated that “the one thing [she] hope[s] we never again leave aside is the role of ethics in the study and teaching of leadership” (p. 200).

With respect to leadership, ethics is about the kind of persons leaders are —their character and what they do, their actions, and behaviours, how they make decisions, the things that they value, advocate for, privilege, and sacrifice. Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) defined ethical leadership as a “demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making” (p.120). This definition implies that ethical behavior is the leader’s character, not an attitude or front that the leader puts on when others are watching. Authentic ethical leaders’ beliefs and principles are intertwined and ethical action is the result of such beliefs and principles. Ethical leaders are motivated by a higher purpose. They show concern for other people’s welfare. Ethical leadership is further defined as “simply a matter of leaders having good character and the right values or being a person of strong character” (Freeman & Stewart, 2006, p. 2). Ethical leadership is, therefore, less about the personality of the individual and more about behaviour and character, which reflects the leader’s principles and beliefs (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Resick, Hanges, Dickson and Mitchelson (2006) related that ethical leaders possess and embody character and integrity, ethical awareness, community/people-orientation; they are motivating, encouraging, and empowering.

Other models of leadership such as Burns’ (1978) transformational leadership, Greenleaf’s servant-leadership, and Kouzes and Posner’s Leadership Challenge have ethical overtones. The fundamental difference between ethical leadership and these models is that

ethical leadership is centered on the character of the individual and his or her capacity to affirm values, clarify, articulate, and share the moral premise on which his/her leadership is based.

Yukl (2006) outlined that the field of ethical leadership is ambiguous and involves various constituents and so becomes difficult to evaluate. However, regardless of these perceived difficulties, ethical leadership has contributed to the shift in focus from expertise, power and charisma to leadership as a value-based construct.

Part Two

Newer Conceptualizations of Leadership

The present decade invites an imaginative and fresh perception to leadership and organizations. Whitney et al (2010) related that diversity is the norm in the twenty first century milieu, institutions are being reinvented, and decision-making requires “unprecedented appreciation of differences and collaboration” (p. 3). This kind of environment requires a leadership that is not only relational but also positive, interdependent, and interconnected. Furthermore, the leadership that the twenty first century demands is one that not only inspires and motivates, but one that also turns potential into positive power, producing ripple effects of positivity. The philosophies of Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) have given rise to leadership practices that respond to these demands. Twenty first century leadership discourse now emphasizes a new rhetoric—that of appreciative leadership, emotional leadership, and positive leadership.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Appreciative Leadership

Appreciative leadership stems from the philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry which is “the study of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 1). It is concerned with recognizing the best in people and the world

around them, perceiving those things which give life and excellence to living human systems, and affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials. Instead of focusing on the root cause of failure, it focusses on the root cause of success.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has a catalytic effect. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) related that by tapping into accounts of organizations that function at their best, AI unleashes commitment that “creates energy for positive change” (p. 4). When Appreciative Inquiry is used to investigate human behavior or organizational phenomena the *good* becomes *better* because a positive drive is created within individuals and organizations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Van Tiem, 2004). AI captures the imaginations, rewards the contribution of individuals, and inspires individuals in an organization (Zolno, 2002). It seeks to translate best intentions into reality, to make imaginations into beliefs and values and to put dreams into practice.

Leadership that embraces and emphasizes the principles of Appreciative Inquiry is referred to as “appreciative leadership.” More specifically, appreciative leadership is “the relational capacity to mobilize creative potential and to turn it into positive power—to set in motion positive ripples of confidence, energy, enthusiasm and performance—to make a positive difference in the world” (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Rader, 2010, p. 3). Embedded in this definition are four key features of appreciative leadership: (a) it is relational; (b) it is positive; (c) it turns potential into positive power; and (d) it produces ripple effects (Whitney et al, 2010). The concept of appreciative leadership assumes a different stance from the previous kinds of leadership discussed in this chapter because of its emphasis on positive and life-affirming capacity. The idea of relationships in appreciative leadership is also radically different from the relational principles enmeshed in other forms of leadership. According to Whitney et al (2010), the appreciative leader “accepts relationships as always present, as here from the beginning, as

surrounding us, and as infusing us with their presence” (p. 6). That is, the appreciative leader does not seek to change individuals but views them with an appreciative eye in order to best relate to them and perform with them.

Appreciative leadership is a positive worldview (Whitney et al, 2010). Appreciative leaders constantly seek to find the inherent positive potential in every human being and every situation. Appreciative leaders use “positive approaches to get positive results” (Whitney et al, 2010, p. 9). They seek to reward, to unearth, to identify and magnify the best of what is and then design systems or formulate strategies that are in tandem with that positivity to produce or create more ripple effects.

Carr-Stewart and Walker (2003) used the Appreciative Inquiry process to conduct research with educational administrators/superintendents. In their research, they engaged these individuals in appreciative interviews about their leadership success. They focussed on the best of what is by asking participants to identify a time in their experience when they felt most effective and engaged, and to think of a time when they felt especially creative in their leadership. They invited participants to write down their stories, share their experiences, and describe their dreams and aspirations. By engaging in such a process, Carr-Stewart and Walker noted that superintendents defined their future role “as partnership builders and brokers; programme deliverers, guardians of public education; change agents; advocates and visionaries” (p. 12). Through this high engagement strength-based process, individuals were able to create principles and envision a desired future. Carr-Stewart and Walker reported that the AI process enabled participants to come away with a more positive view of leadership, and a profound belief in themselves and their organizations.

Whitney et al (2010) noted that based on the successful work that they have done with AI and the extensive research they conducted into appreciative leadership and positive power, they have developed five key areas of relational practices or strategies for enacting appreciative leadership. These five strategies are inquiry, inclusion, inspiration, integrity, and illumination.

Inquiry. Whitney et al (2010) posited that appreciative questioning is an immensely positive force. Positive questions open up the possibilities of best practices, success stories, and creativity. Additionally, positive questions further unlock “positive emotions essential to high performance such as acceptance, validation, job satisfaction, and courage” (p. 28). The appreciative leader is intentional in asking positive questions that guide people towards elevated levels of consciousness. Positive questions lead to curiosity, learning, deepened relationships, and a change towards more positive outcomes (Whitney et al, 2010).

Illumination. Illumination in the practice of appreciative leadership relates to the leader’s capacity to optimize people’s strengths and then align those strengths for development and collaborative advantages. It is the art of analyzing strengths and then standardizing procedures based on those strengths. The appreciative leaders provides opportunity for people to do what they do well and then collaborate with others who see strengths as complementary (Whitney, et al, 2010).

Inclusion. Within today’s multicultural, multi-generational, and multi-talented workforce, the practice of inclusion is fundamental to leadership (Rost, 1993; Whitney, et al, 2010). The practice of inclusion dictates that “all voices matter.” The appreciative leader takes into account the perspective of all relevant and interested persons, all whose future is affected in the decision making process. Whitney et al (2010) stated that appreciative leadership “draws on the generative capacity of inclusion.” In doing so, it invites diverse groups of people

to co-construct and coauthor their future. This process of inclusion fosters team work, shared visions, and shared leadership (Whitney et al, 2010).

Inspiration. Inspiration has the potential to create new possibilities, hope for the future, and vision. Crucial to the practice of appreciative leadership is emphasizing what inspires people. As a result, the appreciative leader listens attentively and continuously ask questions in order to find out what people care about and what moves people to action. When people are inspired their creative potential is unleashed and they function at their optimal level in their teams and organizations. Appreciative leadership seeks ways to inspire people so that they can create individuals, teams, and organizations with extensive creative capacity, and collective wisdom (Whitney, et al, 2010).

Integrity. “Appreciative leadership begins and ends with integrity” (Whitney et al, 2010, p. 158). Integrity is the key to engendering credibility and trustworthiness (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Importantly, integrity is the moral compass that guides the actions, behaviours, and decision making of the leader. Integrity anchors and translates feeling and thinking into doing. Maxwell (1993) related that integrity is the cord that binds ourself together and fosters a spirit of contentment within us. It is the unifying force of what we do and what we say. Guy (1990) characterized integrity as “obedience to the unenforceable” (p. 4). It does not require sanctions, or codes. A leader with integrity does not vacillate between value systems in the face of conflicts but is upright, forceful and gentle in affirming the values that form his or her philosophy of leadership. Whitney et al (2010) related that appreciative leaders are persons who refuse what is ethically wrong and accept what is ethically right (Whitney et al, 2010). They carefully ponder the myriad of ethical issues that confront them and remain firm to the commitment of the good of the whole.

Essentially, the appreciative leader is an embodiment of inquiry, illumination, inclusion, inspiration, and integrity. These principles, in the practice of leadership, make good things happen in life affirming ways. However, the inspiring and fundamentally positive theory of Appreciative Inquiry, and its derivative, appreciative leadership are not without limitations. One of the most common concerns present in the literature on AI is that a focus on the positive experiences and stories silence the negative experiences of participants and so represses potentially important negative conversations that need to take place (Busche, 2011; Miller, Fitzgerald, Murrell, Preston & Ambekar, 2005). Further, Oliver (2005) raised the argument that proponents of AI treat the concepts of positive and negative as having intrinsic meaning, that is, negating the possibility that what may be positive for some, may be negative for others (Busche, 2011). Other scholars have questioned the possibility of inquiry into the positive without evoking instances of the negative, given that behind every positive image lies a negative one (Busche, 2011; Fineman, 2006). Fitzgerald, Oliver, and Hoxsey (2010) cited examples where AI created uncomfortable feelings in participants, as well as brought to light previously repressed thoughts. Rather than dismiss those feelings the authors used the opportunity to facilitate inquiry into those censored experiences. According to Fitzgerald et al (2010) inquiring into the negative had a beneficial impact. They referred to the embrace of the negative and the positive as “authentic appreciation” (p. 230). In this sense, appreciation is knowing, being conscious of, and taking full or sufficient account of all aspects of human and organizational life (Grant & Humphries, 2006).

Another negative to using Appreciative Inquiry is that it limits the researcher’s focus to explore only to positive social phenomena. Additionally, participants have to have sufficient experience of the topic in order to uncover the mystery of the positives into organizations and

human experiences. In this sense, it may exclude individuals who could provide information on negative aspects of organizational life that need urgent attention, thereby closing the space to discuss factors in an organization that may lead to its degeneration.

However, regardless of these criticisms, AI has practical implications and provides a fresh conversation and a rather powerful process through which individuals and organizations can learn, grow, and change. Importantly, its proponents maintain that “we do not dismiss accounts of conflict, problems, or stress. We simply do not use them as the basis of analysis or action” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 18).

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Salovey and Mayer (1990) formulated the term “Emotional Intelligence” (EI). They described it as comprising three mental processes: (a) the appraisal and expression of emotions in oneself and others; (b) the regulation of emotion in oneself and others; and (c) the utilization of emotions to facilitate thought. Goleman (1995) further popularized the term in his book *Emotional Intelligence*. He identified the five foundational competencies that are critical to EI. These are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness (empathy), and social skills (relationship management). According to Goleman (1998) self-awareness is the first component of EI and it refers to an individual’s ability to recognize varying moods, emotions, and drives. Self-regulation is the second most important component of EI and it relates to the ability to control one’s mood as well as the propensity to suspend one’s judgment before acting or responding. Self-motivation, the third component, relates to the capacity to work beyond the need for money or status. Goleman (1998) stated that self-motivated leaders have a “deeply embedded desire to achieve for the sake of the achievement” (p. 99). They express a passion for the job, creative drive to succeed, and demonstrate a love for learning. Social awareness

(empathy) is the leader's ability to understand the emotional make-up of other people. Goleman (1998) related that the empathetic leader carefully and thoughtfully considers other people's emotions in the process of making decisions and demonstrate skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions. Social skill, the final component of EI, refers to the leader's proficiency in managing relationships, engaging in networking, and leading teams as well as change processes.

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly being viewed as a crucial factor in organizational success (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque & Rowe, 2010). Research carried out by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) provided evidence of the important role EI plays in organizational effectiveness. They concluded that leaders who possess high levels of EI are more likely to be successful and achieve organizational goals while those leaders who have low levels of EI are less likely to exert positive influence over others; as a result, they become a barrier to organizational success.

Though the literature highlighted the relationship between EI and gender, showing that women tend to achieve better results on EI components than men (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999), evidence abounds that EI is not a competency that is exclusive to certain individuals or groups, but one that can be learned and nurtured in both individuals and groups (Kunnanatt, 2004; Lynn, 2005; Shapiro, 2002; Taylor & Bagby, 2000; Scarfe, 2000). These claims have been supported by Goleman et al (2002), who concurred that EI competencies "are not innate talents, but learned abilities, each of which has a unique contribution to making leaders more resonant, and therefore more effective" (p. 38).

According to Goleman, amidst all the other competencies such as cognitive intelligence, EI is the *sine qua non* of leadership. Goleman's research into EI as an ingredient of excellent

performance in organizational leadership showed that EI was twice as important as other competencies such as cognitive skills, big picture thinking, and visioning. Bennis (2001) related that EI accounts for 85 to 90 percent of the success of organizational leaders, and that EI “more than any other asset, more than IQ or technical expertise, is the most important overall success factor in careers” (p. xv).

A study conducted by Kerr, Garvin, Heaton, and Boyle (2006) on the relationship between managerial EI and a rating of leadership effectiveness revealed that individual’s EI may indeed be a key determining factor of effective leadership. They stated that “[l]eadership is intrinsically an emotional process, whereby leaders recognize followers’ emotional states, attempt to evoke emotions in followers, and then seek to manage followers’ emotional states accordingly” (p. 268). A similar study carried out by Rosette and Ciarrochi (2005) on employee’s perception of supervisor effectiveness showed that the ability to understand others emotions was the strongest predictor of leadership effectiveness. Given these results, it is recommended that emotional intelligence be included in leadership training programmes.

Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and Positive Leadership

Positive Organizational Scholarship is an emerging concept in the leadership literature. It came to prominence in the 2000s and has various linkages to Appreciative Inquiry, positive psychology, humanistic organizational behaviours, and citizenship behavior (Cameron, Dutton, & Quin, 2003; Caza & Caza, 2004). POS focuses on the concepts of appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality, and meaningfulness in organizations. It positions abundance and well-being as key indicators for organizational success. Cameron et al (2003) emphasized that POS is focused on especially positive outcomes, processes and attributes of organizations and their members. The POS approach shifts the focus from negativism to a positive orientation of

organizations and individuals, emphasizing what is going right with employees and organizations, rather than what is going wrong.

Positive leadership and a leader's emotional intelligence skills have been closely linked. Frederickson (2003) argued that "individual organizational members' experiences of positive emotions – like joy, interest, pride, contentment, gratitude, and love —can be transformed and fuel upward spirals toward optimal individual and organizational functioning" (p. 163). A leader's emotion can be contagious and may spread quickly throughout the organization. It is, therefore, important for leaders to maintain a positive stance in their leadership practices and to skillfully navigate the emotional reactions of individuals. According to Cameron (2008) "positive leaders focus on organizational flourishing, enabling the best of the human condition, and creating exceptionally positive outcomes, not merely on resolving problems, overcoming obstacles, increasing competitiveness, or even attaining profitability" (Cameron, 2008, p. 13). This focus on exceptionally positive states yields greater positive performance on the part of employees (Cameron & Plews, 2012).

Cameron (2008) suggested that applying the principles and practices of Positive Organizational Scholarship to leadership can lead to extraordinary performance. Later, Spreitzer and Cameron (2012) concurred, stating that "positivity unlocks and elevates resources in individuals, groups, and organizations, so that capabilities are broadened and capacity is built and strengthened" (p. 85). Cameron and Plews (2012) conducted an in-depth interview with Jim Mallozi, CEO of Prudential Real Estate and Relocation, about ways in which he implemented POS in his organization. Jim Mallozi declared that he valued people's strength, invited people to help in positive ways, celebrated success and consistently created a positive atmosphere. These practices led to the successful merger of two culturally different organizations, dramatic

improvements in financial performance, improved customer satisfaction scores, and markedly enhanced employee engagement (Cameron & Plews, 2012).

Scholars in the field of POS suggest that psychological capital, like human capital, can be viewed as assets to be embraced, developed and nurtured by leaders in organizations. Leaders can foster a supportive environment that impacts positively on job satisfaction. Bono & Ilies (2006) examined the effects of leaders' positive emotional expressions on the emotional and attitudinal responses of their followers and found that leaders who express positive emotions engender the same in followers. Peterson & Luthans (2003) investigated the impact of hopeful leaders and found that leader hope leads to follower satisfaction and retention. Fry, Vittuci, and Cedillo (2005) found that Army leaders who express love and care for soldiers' well-being satisfied followers need for the same. Applying a POS lens in leadership has, therefore, proven to promote interpersonal flourishing, positive emotions, and energizing networks (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012).

However, like Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Organizational Scholarship has been criticized for its lack of clarity into what is positive. Additionally, debates have risen about what exactly constitutes goodness, and whether there is such a thing as universal human virtues. Despite the debates, POS scholars hold firm that they do not claim to impugn or deny traditional scholarship neither do they seek to exclude traditionally positive outcomes such as achieving goals or profitability (Cameron & Plews, 2012). The POS focus is unapologetically biased towards life-giving and generative human conditions, which, if emphasized more, can open up new possibilities and approaches to leadership and leadership development.

Summary

The evolutionary path of leadership constitutes a shift in focus from leaders to followers as well as peers and a wide array of individuals as crucial to the leadership dynamic. It is no longer defined as either centered on characteristics, or situational or power-based; rather it is a relational, dyadic, and shared process. More recent configurations of the leadership phenomenon emphasize the emotional dimension of leadership, leadership that fosters positive change and promotes ongoing organizational success. These concepts are consistent with the generation in which they were formed. The traditional philosophy represented a world which was mechanical, hierarchical and controllable, while the post-industrial models are congruent with an age that values collaboration, empowerment, power-sharing, emotions, positive affect, and morals. An understanding of the past and current theories of leadership can provide a more clear and compelling path to leadership development and the goals and ambitions of future leaders.

Part Three

Leadership Development in Higher Education: Trends and Issues

The leadership theories that have evolved over the decades give a new perspective into the phenomenon of leadership. Industrial models of leadership offer insights into leadership characteristics, behaviours, situations, and power while post-industrial models navigate relationships, collaboration, ethics, and commitment to service. More recent approaches emphasize the power of emotions, flourishing, vitality, and interdependence in the leadership relationship. However, the most significant shift in the post-industrial paradigm of leadership is that it resituates leadership from endowed traits that are set aside for specific individuals to a learnable concept, accessible to every human being (Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Rost, 1991). As a result, educational institutions, and more importantly, institutions of Higher Education have been

called upon to foster students' leadership capacities. However, just as there is a lack of consensus about how to define leadership, so too, the question of how young people develop leadership competencies preoccupies the community of student leadership researchers and practitioners. Among the frequent questions that are being asked are: how is leadership learned and how should it be taught, what is the role of the college environment in student leadership development, do formal leadership development programs enhance students' leadership capacities, and what are the factors that have the greatest impact on students' learning leadership? These questions are at the center of the student leadership movement. Importantly, for the last two decades scholars and educators have made "learning leadership," as well as responding to these questions prime research topics (Brungardt, 1997; Dugan, 2006; Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007).

Though in its infancy, when compared to the decades of leadership research, research in student leadership development has been increasing. Empirical research into college student leadership development began with Astin's (1993) ground-breaking research on leadership development as more than a by-product of a college degree (Dugan, 2011). Following Astin's (1993) research, numerous scholars continue to expend efforts to understand the ways in which the collegiate environment contributes to student leadership development (Boatman, 1999; Jenkins, 2012; Odom, Boyd, & Williams, 2012; Peterson & Peterson, 2012; Rosch & Caza, 2012). Along with published journal articles on student leadership, several books focus specifically on the development of student leadership (Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, Wagner & Associates, 2011), exemplary practices of student leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2008), and models related to student leadership development (Astin & Astin, 2000; Komives et al, 2007).

More importantly, in addition to Astin's (1993) research, many trends coalesce to support the idea of the importance of developing in students the requisite skills and competencies for effective leadership in the twenty first century. Among these trends are the paradigm shift in the perception of leadership from a hierarchical, chain of command structure to one that is relational and collaborative (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1991), the emphasis on the twenty first century as a "connective era" (Lipman-Blumen, 2000), the importance of shared leadership roles (Conger & Pearce, 2003), and the college learning and developmental outcomes movement in the United States (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Additionally, student leadership development has been fuelled by the emergence of new leadership associations, conferences, and resources for leadership educators. Among these are: the International Leadership Association (ILA), the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP), the Association of Leadership Educators (ALE), the Leadership Educators Institute, the National Leadership Symposium and the *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies* (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Today, as a result of these trends, the literature on college student leadership emphasizes that students have the potential to increase their skills and knowledge through purposeful leadership intervention (Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996; Komives et al, 2007). Higher Education, has therefore, been challenged to rethink and foster creative ways to prepare students for leadership in the wider society (Miller, 2003).

According to Astin and Astin (2000), "colleges and universities provide rich opportunities for recruiting and developing leaders through the curriculum and co-curriculum" (p. 3). More students are enrolling in colleges and universities in the twenty first century than any other time in history, and by virtue of their numbers, "students are ultimately higher education's most critical stakeholders" (p. 27). Research conducted at the National Centre for

Education Statistics (NCES) (2012) revealed that between the years 2000 and 2010, enrolment in degree granting institutions increased 37 percent, from 15.3 million to 21.0 million. The statistical findings indicated that between 2000 and 2010, the number of 18 to 24 year-olds entering college increased from 27.3 million to 30.7 million, an increase of 12 percent, and the percentage of 18 to 24 year-olds enrolled in college rose from 35 percent in the 2000 to 41 percent in 2010. This increase in enrolment suggests that a significant number of young people are matriculating each year from colleges and universities to take on some form of leadership task in the wider society. Higher Education, therefore, has an obligation to ensure that student leaders are equipped with positive power to make a positive difference in the world.

The professional standards for Higher Education, as mandated in the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), outlines that “colleges need to develop not just better, but more leaders...and that students must be better prepared to serve as citizen leaders in a global community” (Miller, 2003, p. 196). As a result, teaching leadership through development programs is becoming pervasive in colleges and universities. Currently, virtually all colleges espouse leadership as a “key collegiate outcome” (Dugan, Bohle, Gebhardt, Hofert, Wilk, & Cooney, 2011).

College Student Leadership Development: Insights from Empirical Research

In order to help educators respond appropriately to students’ developmental needs, an understanding of student development in leadership is important. Wagner (2011) articulated that a lack of understanding of how leaders develop may result in educators “pushing harder with the same message or dismissing some students as unable to grasp leadership concepts” (p. 85). According to Brungardt (1997) leadership development refers to “almost every form of growth or stage of development in the life cycle that promotes encourages and assists in one’s leadership

potential” (p. 83). He further related that leadership development includes learning through both formal and unstructured activities from childhood development and adult life experiences, as well as participating in leadership development programs. Leadership development, is therefore, seen as a continuous and life long process (Brungardt, 1997).

Researchers have focussed on both structured as well as informal processes that impact leadership development in an effort to understand the process of leadership development among college students. Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt (2001) assessed the developmental outcomes of college students’ involvement in leadership activities. The results from their grounded theory research indicated that leadership participants showed growth in civic responsibility, leadership skills, multicultural awareness, understanding of leadership theories, and personal and societal values.

Other recent research into student leadership development includes those concentrated on extracurricular and community service activities. Kelling and Hoover’s (2005) study on the concept of student leadership development in students-based clubs and organizations revealed that students who are engaged in such activities develop communication and organizational skills. Kelling and Hoover related that “personal leadership skill development can begin and be enhanced when students participate in clubs, organizations, and team settings” (p. 5). Hancock, Dyk, and Jones (2012) explored how adolescents’ involvement in extracurricular activities influenced their self-perception of their leadership skills. The findings from their research suggested that adults in the home and school environment could significantly influence how adolescents view their leadership skills. They reported that parental support was a significant predictor of adolescents’ perception of their leadership skills in sport, school, and community and extracurricular activities. Other empirical research on leadership development in Higher

Education revealed that students learn leadership through faculty mentoring (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), sociocultural discussions (Antonio, 2001, Kezar & Moriarty, 2000), and community service involvement (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999; Dugan & Komives, 2010). However, early researchers into student leadership development such as Astin and Astin (2000) suggested that, though important, rather than be limited to student organizations or community service activities, purposeful interventions or leadership education, such as formal leadership programs, could empower students to advance the larger educational mission.

Based on the premise that leadership education can buttress and give significance to student leadership experience, formal training programs have been increasing across college and university campuses, especially in the United States (Zimmerman-Oster & Brukhardt, 1999). Formal leadership programs in Higher Education are conceptualized as programs that are purposefully designed to enhance and foster the knowledge, skills and values of college students (Haber, 2011, Dugan, 2011). Dugan et al (2011) noted that formal leadership programs might represent “an overarching set of experiences spanning multiple platforms of delivery” (p. 67). In 1999 there were approximately 800 Leadership Development Programs in institutions of Higher Education (Zimmerman-Oster & Brukhardt, 1999). In 1992, the University of Richmond became the first university (in the United States) to offer an undergraduate degree in leadership (Liberty & Prewitt, 1999). The efforts made by these universities are fuelled by the belief that building better leaders is essential to building a better society.

Further research into student leadership development revealed a considerable number of programs that are geared towards fostering leadership skills and enhancing the leadership capacity of college students. A cursory glance of co-curricular program offerings from the

National Clearing House for Leadership Programs (NCLP) highlight over 170 institutions across the United States of America which have leadership development programs. Other organizations such as the Kellogg Foundation have funded over 30 programs that are focussed on the leadership development of college students. The premise of the funding initiative “was that effective leadership skills can be taught and that the college environment is a strategic setting where learning these skills and theories should occur” (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999, p. 52). As well, the Centre for Creative Leadership offers core development programs, specialized skills development programs, leadership coaching and leadership assessment. Other recent notable development programs related to college students are: Leadershape (2010), LeadAmerica (2010) and Dance Floor Theory (Swift Kick, 2010). The growth of leadership development programs continues to be evident in all areas of the academy ranging from academic courses and certificates (Riggio, Ciulla & Sorenson, 2003) to workshops and one-time seminars (Carry, 2003).

Leadership Development Programmes: Documented Impact from Empirical Research

Based on the view that leadership can be improved with intentional intervention, formal programs are considered a key ingredient in college student leadership development. Rosch and Caza (2012) suggested that leadership competencies are best developed overtime through a program that fosters personalized integration of theory and practice. He reported that there are many areas of leadership development that can be addressed through participating in short-term training programs. Additionally, Dugan et al (2011) related that macro level assessment of students’ participation in formal leadership programs report positive results. Haber (2011) argued that recent research demonstrated that those students who engaged in at least one program report higher leadership capacity than those who have no such experience.

Bayer's (2012) research into the effectiveness of student leadership development programs suggested that exposure to student leadership development programs can contribute to positive changes in students' perceptions of their leadership development. Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt's (1999) evaluation of leadership development programs categorized outcomes into three groups: individual outcomes, community outcomes and institutional outcomes. The researchers reported positive outcomes across all three categories. In terms of individual outcomes, 93 percent of the participants indicated that they had an increased sense of social/civic/political awareness. Others reported an increased commitment to service and volunteerism (86 percent), improved communication skills (85 percent) increased self-esteem (74 percent), increased desire for change (62 percent), and improved interaction with faculty (50 percent).

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) reported the findings for the institutional outcomes to be, among others, improvements in institutional collaboration and networking, improvements in external support for the institution, improved communication across ethnic groups on campus, and improved occurrence of multidisciplinary activity. The community outcomes included the creation of new non-profit organizations, an improved community economy, and increased political involvement of the community.

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt also evaluated the impact of short-term and long-term programs. For short-term programs, a longitudinal study was conducted on college student participants of the LeaderShape development programme. Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) reported that the participants demonstrated an increase in their ability to create organizational visions and their general transformational leadership skills. Moreover, the participants reported that their leadership skills were improved because of their training.

Evaluation into long-term programs revealed that students who were immersed in these programs relate “significant changes on the measured leadership outcomes of increased self-understanding, ability to set goals, sense of ethics, willingness to take risks, civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, community orientation, and a variety of leadership skills” (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999, p. 62).

Though empirical research consistently supports the significance of leadership development programs on college students’ capacity for leadership, empirical research also illustrates that theoretical grounding consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of leadership is necessary in program conceptualization and delivery (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Eich, 2008; Haber, 2011). Rost (1993) noted that “scholars, trainers, developers, and practitioners must rethink their old assumptions about leader development” (p. 101). Leadership development, Rost argued, must not only focus on the leader but on the group as leadership is a collaborative process. This focus on collaboration is particularly relevant because for today’s young people “relationships matter more than institutions” (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p. 278). Komives et al (1998) noted that “[l]eadership today shows that there is great wisdom and energy in the group and everyone in the group has a great deal to learn from each other” (p. 19). In agreement with this perspective, Berg (2003), Bibby (2001), and Howe and Strauss (2000) related that today’s college students express a preference for relational approaches to leadership and are more geared towards collaboration. As a result, the shift in patterns of how students learn leadership must be understood in terms of these generational factors.

Student Leadership Models: Towards a Theoretical Foundation

In response to the post-industrial paradigm of leadership and the declared need of colleges and universities for leadership development, scholars have designed leadership models

that have been applied as theoretical contexts for formal leadership development programs (Komives et al, 2011). These program models have been influenced by the writings of Rost (1991) and Burns (1978) and focus mostly on the collaborative and the evolutionary process of leadership and leadership development. Such models include servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). This model has been previously discussed in the context of the post-industrial paradigms. However, though it has been widely used as leadership development models in civil society, it was originally inspired by research into student leadership development. Models that are exclusive to college student leadership development are the Social Change Model (SCM) (Higher Education Research Institute) (HERI) (1996), Leadership Identity Development Model (LID) (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005), the Relational Leadership Model (RLM) (Komives et al, 2007) and the Student Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

The Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership. The Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership was created by a group of scholars facilitated by Alexander and Helin Astin. It was designed specifically for college students and is the most widely used theoretical model to assess leadership development on college campuses (Komives, et al, 2011). The model is congruent with the post-industrial paradigm of leadership in that it is concerned less about the leader and more about the leadership community. It promotes the importance of understanding the self, clarifying one's values and interacting with other members of the society in an effort to create change for all involved. It views leadership as a process and not positional and as such seeks to empower each individual in the learning community. The SCM identifies leadership as a "purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that result in positive social change" (Komives, Wagner, & Associates, 2009, p. xii). The model emphasizes two core principles: "social responsibility" which is manifested in change for the common good and "student's knowledge"

and capacity to work collaboratively in groups (HERI, 1996). These principles assist student with leadership growth across seven critical values. They operate at the individual level (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment) the group level (collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility) and the community level (citizenship). These levels and values collectively contribute to an eight value which is change for the common good (Komives, et al, 2011). The concept of the SCM suggests that leadership is a developmental process in which students move back and forth across the levels. That is, as they experience group values their sense of self may begin to change and they may go back to those values to re-evaluate themselves in response to a newly developed framework (Komives, et al, 2011).

Komives et al (2011) outlined that the Social Change Model can be taught directly as content to help students understand the values embedded in leadership. Additionally, the model is useful in the planning of leadership programs. A program grounded in the Social Change Model would engage students in a process of understanding their identity, clarifying their values, and engaging with other members of their communities.

However, though a valuable tool for leadership development, it has a notable limitation. The model fails to explicitly include values associated with cultural competence (Komives, et al, 2011). Though the value of cultural competence could be deemed a by-product of collaboration, the exclusion of such a key feature may send an implicit message as to the lack of its importance. Teaching or practicing student leadership without careful consideration of intercultural contexts may result in student leaders lacking the competence to deal with issues in a pluralistic and culturally diverse world.

The Leadership Identity Development (LID) model. The LID model was constructed from a grounded theory methodology which aimed at understanding the processes a student

experiences in creating a leadership identity. It was an attempt to understand the stages of leadership that students experience or the different ways in which students learn leadership at different times (Komives, et al, 2005). The LID has its base in the relational leadership model that views leadership as a process. It dictates that leadership development happens through stages. Students transition from being totally unaware of leadership to having leadership as part of the core of one's identity (Komives et al, 2005). The LID model includes six stages. The first two stages are Awareness and Exploration/Engagement. According to Komives et al (2005) these two stages often occur prior to entering college. During the Awareness stage, the student recognizes leaders, but operates as an inactive follower. The other stages are more complex and often require immersion or emersion phases. The third stage is the Leader Identified stage. At this stage of development students see leadership as largely positional and depend upon the leader to give directives. At the fourth stage, Leadership Differentiated, the student identifies as leader anyone who contributes to the functioning of a group. In this way, the student sees his or her contributions as leadership and this belief adds significance to his/her leadership identity. During the fifth stage or Generativity, the leader becomes any person who participates in the process of leadership. At this stage leadership is now a stable feature of one's identity. It no longer depends on whether one holds a position of leadership (Komives, et al, 2011). Moreover, the students become more aware of his or her personal strengths and values. At the final stage, Integration/Synthesis, the student is confident that he or she can operate from anywhere in the organization to accomplish the purposes of the organization. Leadership is viewed as a participatory experience and the student is able to focus on the mission and values of the group and reflect on them in his/her daily practices (Komives, et al, 2011).

The LID model is useful in developmental programs because it emphasizes that students start at very different places developmentally (Wagner, 2011). However, the model has limitations in that it does not offer a detailed approach of how leadership may develop in diverse groups. The various student leadership models are intended to enhance the skills and competencies of students, as well as to equip them with practical knowledge. Leadership needs to be practiced as much as it needs to be learned. As a result, students who are actively involved in deliberate and continuous formal or informal leadership programmes or those exposed to leadership models are able to maximize their leadership capacity, growth and effectiveness.

The Relational Leadership Model (RLM). Komives et al's (2007) theoretical model of relational leadership stresses the reciprocal nature of relationships in the leadership process. It offers a post-industrial approach to leadership, emphasizing collaboration, trust, ethical practices (Ciulla, 1996), and authenticity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Komives et al (2007) conceptualized leadership as a “relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (p. 74). This model emphasizes the importance of relationships in leadership and the trusting relationships among people in a collaborative process. The RLM consists of five key components: (a) inclusiveness; (b) empowering; (c) ethical purpose; (d) purposeful; and (e) process.

Process is seen as the overarching concept in which the other four elements operate. More specifically, the RLM views leadership as that which:

- is “*inclusive* of people and diverse points of view;
- *empowers* those involved;
- is *purposeful* and builds commitment toward common purposes;

- is *ethical*, and recognizes that all four of those elements are accomplished by being *process-oriented*' (Komives et al, 2007, p. 68).

The relational leadership model emphasizes that through collaboration with others, individuals can make a difference from any place within a group or organization, whether as the titled leader or as an active member. It situates leadership as an evolutionary process that takes place among individuals rather than top-down bureaucratic influence (Komives et al, 2007; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Kouzes and Posner's leadership challenge. Kouzes and Posner's (2008) leadership challenge as a post-industrial model focusses on mobilizing college students to make extraordinary difference in their institutions while building meaningful relationships in the process. It is based on 30 years of exhaustive research by Kouzes and Posner but is mostly criticized by Rost for lacking in definition and for its behavioural and contingency flavour of the industrial paradigm of leadership.

Kouzes and Posner's model is based on their research into what leaders do when they are at their personal best. The student leadership challenge is grounded in Kouzes and Posners' (2007) extensive research on *The Leadership Challenge*. They collected ordinary people's perceptions of what they think they do when they are at their peak in their leadership experience regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, age and other variables. The student leadership challenge model is based on real-life stories and examples exclusively from college students. These stories revealed five common patterns of human behaviour and ten related commitments. These five patterns were: (a) model the way; (b) inspire a shared vision; (c) challenge the process; (d) enable others to act; and (e) encourage the heart. According to Kouzes and Posner (2008) commitment to these five practices of exemplary leadership will aid in advancing the

organization toward the vision of organizational success. These five leadership behaviours have been consistently measured and validated by the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI), which is one of the most widely used leadership measurement instrument in the world (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Model the way. The practice of modelling the way suggest that though one may have a title as a leader, exemplary student leaders who desire to reach the highest standards “must model the behaviour they expect of others” (Kouzes & Posner, 2008, p. 11). However, in order to do this, student leaders must be clear about the principles that guide their lives so that their behaviour can be congruent with these values and standards. More importantly, the leader must be able to build consensus around common principles and values in order to represent the larger community (Kouzes and Posner, 2008).

Inspire a shared vision. Imagining a positive future of an organization is a key ingredient to being a “catalytic” leader. Kouzes and Posner (2008) opined that exemplary student leaders are capable of imagining greater opportunities to come; “they envision the future, the exciting and ennobling possibilities ahead” (p. 13). However, they have to ensure that their followers are able to see the future that they see by finding a common purpose and motivating others to higher levels of achievement.

Challenge the process. Kouzes and Posner (2008) outlined that a leader who leads others to greatness seeks and accepts challenges. They related that “student leaders make things happen...and to make things happen they actively seek innovative ideas from outside the boundaries of the familiar experience” (p. 76). Challenging the process demands listening to others, as well as accepting mistakes and failures. Exemplary leaders take action in order to get new ideas, programs, and systems adopted (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Enable others to act. The command and control techniques of the traditional leadership models are inconsistent with this approach. Leadership is a team effort and exemplary leaders garner support and encourage collaboration. The assumption is that people support what they help to create. Therefore, when the leaders involve others in the decision-making process, they are building the capacity of others and are more likely to produce extraordinary results (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Encourage the heart. Leaders recognize the contributions of others to the leadership process. They create a culture of celebrating values and victories (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Exemplary leaders can sustain focus and innovations by openly acknowledging the achievements and contributions of their constituents. Creating a climate of authentic care and genuine appreciation is integral to building a strong sense of community spirit and collective identity (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

The five exemplary leadership behaviours are seen as a practical guide for leaders in the twenty first century. According to Kouzes and Posner (2008), consistent devotion to these five principles will enable an individual to emerge an exceptional leader. Additionally, they related that the five practices are not unique to the participants who formed the sample in their research, but are available to anyone who accepts the leadership challenge. They further emphasized that these practices are not unique to a particular time but bears as much relevance today as they did in the past.

Like Burns (1978) and Rost (1991/1993), Kouzes and Posner (2008) stated that “leadership is a process” (p. 2). It should aim for real changes by building “agreement around common principles and common ideals (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Kouzes and Posner offered no definition of leadership but postulated that whatever leadership may be, if students engage in the

five practices, they will be viewed by others as leaders. Importantly, they noted that all individuals are leaders regardless of their status or position in an organization. Therefore, they emphasized that “leadership is not a gene or an inheritance. [Rather] leadership is an identifiable set of skills that are available to everyone” (Kouzes & Posner, 2008, p. 3).

Kouzes and Posner’s (2008) model of student leadership situates leadership development as self-development. It challenges leaders to transform their visions into actions, encourages the shift towards collaboration rather than individuality and mobilizes each individual to liberate the leader within him or herself. As a post-industrial model, the student leadership challenge offers a refreshing approach to the previous bureaucratic models criticized by Rost and others.

A Point of Departure: Possibilities for Leadership Development

The idea that future leaders are not born but grown has shifted leadership towards a more collaborative approach, which makes the concept more accessible to students. However, despite this shift in thinking and approach to leadership development, it is not certain the extent to which leadership development takes the students’ perspectives into account. It is evident that much research has been conducted into student leadership development and from these studies models and programs have emerged. However, given the already extant theories new research should focus on what young people conceive leadership to be instead of what adults dictate that young people need in leadership development (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007).

Importantly, the positive core of leadership that is reflected in concepts such as Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Organizational Scholarship, and Emotional Intelligence, has not yet generated any student leadership development program models. More focussed research into the positive core of student leadership may provide space for designing a program that is in synergy with that positivity. Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Organizational Scholarship

delves into the positive and strength-based aspect of individuals and organizations. Therefore, when these concepts are aligned to leadership development, instead of focusing on performance gaps, leadership development would seek to leverage strengths. Instead of solving problems, leadership development would seek to discover resources, capabilities, and assets. Instead of searching for the root cause of failure, leadership development that is undergirded by AI, EI, and POS would search for the root cause of success so that the success can be replicated, therefore diminishing the negatives. Approaches to leadership development using these principles may help student leaders to consciously construct better approaches towards becoming society's future leaders. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) observed that "[h]uman systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about" (p. 9). The views of Appreciative Inquiry, Emotional Intelligence, and Positive Organizational Scholarship may indeed complement the relational and collaborative approaches to leadership development, as well as suggest important avenues for understanding and addressing key issues in order to foster leadership development.

Summary

The concepts and practices of leadership have taken diverse turns over the centuries. The most notable shift is how leadership is understood. Whereas, in past decades, leadership and leadership capacity were seen as being hierarchical and inherent, leadership is now often seen as a collaborative process that can be learned by anyone, regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, or physical ability. This belief that leadership can be learned, as well as the emerging theories and trends that supported that hypothesis, spurred the development of college student leadership. The ways in which students develop as leaders have been central to the research and literature on student leadership for the last twenty years. In an attempt to develop or enhance leadership skills

and competencies, educators and scholars of student leadership have emphasized purposeful interventions such as leadership training programs. Moreover, with the acknowledgement of the demanding challenges of leadership, scholars have conceptualized theoretical models that undergird the concepts of the post-industrial paradigm of leadership. However, these models are not flawless and continue to evolve with ongoing practice. As such, I suggest that researchers need to continue to reconsider, re-tool, and reflect on new ways to teach leadership to students consistent with this interdependent era.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

It is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs (Owens, 1982).

Introduction

There are several paradigms for discovering “truth” or for “understanding” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Owens, 1982). In the field of educational administration there has been a long battle between two distinctly different paradigms for dominance in systematic inquiry (Owens, 1982). These two paradigms, the rationalist and the naturalistic, have often been described in terms of polar opposites. Terms that have emerged to capture the dichotomy between the paradigms include, “hard vs. soft,” “quantifier vs. describer,” and “rigorous vs. intuitive” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Owens, 1982). Each of these paradigms is premised on different perceptions or the beliefs about the nature of social phenomena and ways of understanding them.

Essentially, the rationalistic paradigm is associated with deductive thinking and embraces the positivist ways of knowing. It is distinguished by its structural, objective and technocratic approach and “yields lean spare description stripped of contextual reference” (Owens, 1982, p. 7). Conversely, the naturalistic paradigm is associated with inductive thinking and embraces a subjective, interpretivist, and consensual approach to understanding social and organizational phenomena (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Owens, 1982). It yields thick description, leaves room for re-interpretation, and seeks to understand human experience from the actor’s own frame of reference (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 2009).

Despite the debates between the two, many researchers have concluded that the rationalistic and the naturalistic paradigms are legitimate forms of inquiry and that emphasis must be placed on one or the other depending on the objective or nature of the research project,

the phenomena under consideration and the constraints of the situation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Palys, 1992; Patton, 2002). In this study, I adopted that pragmatic perspective and concurred with Miles and Huberman's (1994) statement that "research is actually more a craft than a slavish adherence to methodological rules" (p. 5). Accordingly, in crafting my research I employed a case study approach using elements of AI to examine Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, to unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. Responding to these issues required a methodological approach which was participatory, co-constructive, and dialogical. As a result, in order to adequately investigate the phenomena of leadership and leadership development from the students' point of view, and to understand the students' perceptions of positive leadership, I used a qualitative case study which was conducted through an AI process. In this chapter I demonstrate that a case study using elements of AI was commensurate with the stated purpose of the study.

Furthermore, this chapter contains the design that was used to investigate the ways in which Graduate Students explore, conceptualize, and articulate leadership. I outlined the procedures of the research methodology, research methods, and the epistemological and theoretical orientations that served as the background to the methodology. The chapter also provides a description of the instruments as well as the procedures for data analysis. The chapter concludes with my ethical responsibilities, highlighting steps that I took to ensure anonymity and trustworthiness.

Research Design

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) qualitative research is concerned with process rather than products. Qualitative methods focus on interpretation rather than quantification and

are subjective, versus objective, in nature (Brewerton & Milliard, 2004). In qualitative research, “everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 6). Consistent with the nature of qualitative research, the design of this inquiry followed Crotty’s (1998) framework in constructing a qualitative study. Crotty recommended that the research be developed along the following four paradigms: epistemology, methodology, theoretical perspective, and method. The epistemology relates to the philosophical basis upon which the study is built. It identifies the underlying assumptions about reality and human knowledge that the researcher possesses and will therefore bring to the study. The methodology refers to the strategy, plans of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods (Crotty, 1998). The theoretical perspective is the stance that the researcher takes that directs the many phases of the study (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2012). Finally, the method outlines the techniques or processes used to gather and analyse the data (Crotty, 1998). Figure 3.1 is a visual representation of the design.

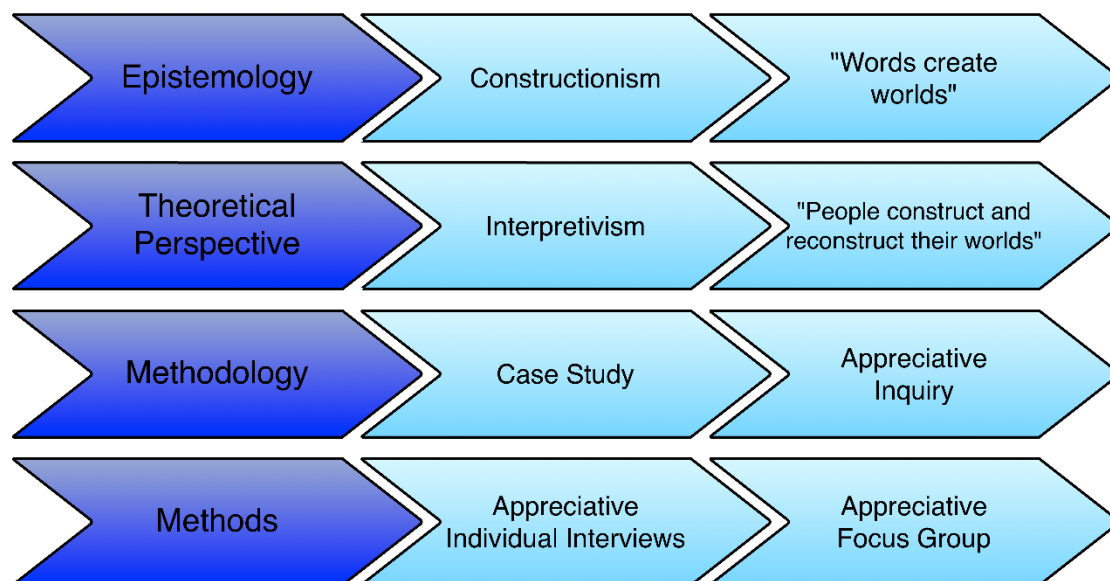


Figure 3.1: The research design. Adapted from Crotty (1998).

Research Epistemology

The epistemological basis that undergirds this study is rooted in constructionism. The concept of constructionism is inspired by constructivism which suggests that individuals create mental models in order to understand the world around them. In comparison, the constructionist paradigm argues that an individual's perception of truth depends on the historical and social context and on the individual's frame of reference (Gergen, 1999). According to Crotty (1998) the constructionist's view is that "all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). That is, reality is not objective; rather it is uniquely experienced, interpreted, and created by individuals in relationships. Truth is not located outside of the observer rather truth is interpreted, constructed and negotiated (Gergen, 1999). From the constructionist paradigm, the individual is not a passive recipient of meaning but an active participant who constantly reflects and constructs meaning in situations and circumstances.

As a constructionist scholar, I believe that events do not inherently contain meaning to be accessed by the observer; instead, we interpret situations and events based on our culture, educational levels, socializations, and daily contemplations about the world. As a result, there is no single, objective reality. Reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing. Therefore, there are multiple realities, and any situation or event can be interpreted in multiple ways by varying individuals in an equally valid manner.

The constructionist believes that "words create worlds" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 51). People construct their reality through language and conversation. The constructionist paradigm is based on the idea that "people's ideas get formed and transformed

through expressions in different media, when actualized in particular contexts, when worked out by individual minds” (Ackerman, 2004). Individuals gain knowledge through conversation with their own concepts and schemes, artifacts or objects. Importantly, in constructionism, the locus of knowledge is relationships, rather than individuals (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Knowledge is communal. It is constructed through the continuous flux of working and learning with other individuals. As a result, I approached the study with the assumption that through dialogues and stories about the best of *what is*, *what has been* and *what might be* in student leadership, a meaning of leadership and a process of leadership development may be discovered among the participants. The participants, through the conversation about their concept of leadership and leadership development were involved in a quest to construct options for a better student leadership organization.

Theoretical Perspective

The interpretivist’s worldview is the theoretical underpinning for this study. Unlike the positivist framework, interpretivism provides an understanding of the social world that is distinct from the natural world. The interpretivist paradigm suggests that “social reality is constructed and interpreted by people rather than something that exists objectively out there” (Denscombe, 2002, p. 18). For the interpretivist, individual responses cannot be predicted. Individuals do not react uniformly to stimuli; rather, people interpret the meaning of objects and action and act upon these interpretations (Abbot, 2010).

Interpretivism presents an understanding of the social world from the point of view of those being studied. It is grounded in the belief that “to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 18). Knowledge is not inherited, it has to be constructed. As a result, for this research, meanings were varied and multiple, leading me to look for the

complexity of views. Consistent with this perspective, my aim for this study was to understand leadership as it is constructed and interpreted by the students directly involved in the leadership process. I sought to understand the values that they ascribe to leadership and what they think leadership development should involve.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research involves critical data collection by way of interviews, and the careful documentation of all information. It is concerned with how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and the meaning that they attribute to their experiences (Merriam, 2009). The primary motive of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. Merriam (2009) explained that the "emic" or insider's perspective rather than the "etic" or outsiders perspective is the focus of qualitative research. This kind of approach was appropriate for the study because I sought to gain an understanding of the concept of leadership from the students' point of view. Little is known about leadership from the students' perspectives because few studies have focussed specifically on leadership from the students' point of view. Consequently, this study allowed for identification and interpretation of the constructed meaning that participants place on their involvement in student leadership, what gives life to their leadership and what they achieve when their leadership is at its best.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) pointed out that in qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 59). As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the personal interaction with the respondents facilitated immediate response to particular situations, enabled me to process data immediately, provided a space for me to clarify and summarize as the need arose, and provided the medium to explore anomalous responses.

Case Study

Importantly, case studies differ from other forms of qualitative research because they require that the phenomenon under investigation occurs within a bounded system (Merriam, 1998). Hatch (2002) related that case studies are “a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized contemporary phenomenon within specified boundaries” (p. 30). Jones, Torres, and Armino (2006) said that the “single most defining characteristic of a case study methodology is the emphasis on the bounded system or the case” (p. 55). This means that the unit of study or the case is defined by certain boundaries. These boundaries, Merriam (2009) explained, can be in the form of the people involved, a programme, a policy, an institution or a community. Applying these parameters to this study, the unit of analysis that I selected is the executive body of the Graduate Student Leaders who are enrolled in a university in a western Canadian province. The uniqueness of the case is that the body of student selected for the study is directly involved in the decision-making process and articulation of policies and procedures in student governance.

Merriam (2009) noted that “the merits of a particular design are inherently related to the rationale for selecting it as the most appropriate plan for addressing the research problem” (pp. 40-41). Given that this research is a unique focus on Graduate Students’ perceptions of leadership and leadership development, a qualitative case study emerges as the appropriate approach. It offers rich, thick description which allows the reader to delve into the experiences or the world of the participants, understanding the variables that give life to their leadership, and the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. It offers insights and illuminates meaning that can expand its reader’s experience. Additionally, Merriam (2009) related that the results derived from case studies are thought to be information rich accounts, and can influence

things such as policy, practice, and future research. This study aimed to uncover the positive core of student leadership with the hope of bringing the students' voices more fully into the student leadership development conversation.

Yin (1994) suggested that for “how” and “why” questions the case study can offer a distinct advantage. The questions that I sought to answer were essentially how and why questions which were designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of leadership when it is at its best. Through the use of “how” and “why” questions I was able to inquire into exceptionally positive moments. By allowing the Graduate Student Leaders to dialogue about their best experiences, their strengths and successes, they were able to create a shared image of a preferred future.

Appreciative Inquiry

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) noted that Appreciative Inquiry is “the cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them” (p. 8). It is a model for change leadership. AI redirects the focus of analysis, enabling individuals to rise above the problems that originally existed (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). By emphasizing or tapping into what makes an organization function at its best, AI releases potential for positive transformation, upward spirals of performance, and sustainable success (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Through the art and practice of asking positive questions, a system's or an individual's capacity can be heightened and begin to perform optimally (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Whitney & Tosten-Bloom, 2010).

The application of Appreciative Inquiry can take place in the four stages, normally referred to as the 4-D cycle - *Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny*. These four phases, as illustrated in

Figure 3.2 serve as the foundation on which change is built (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

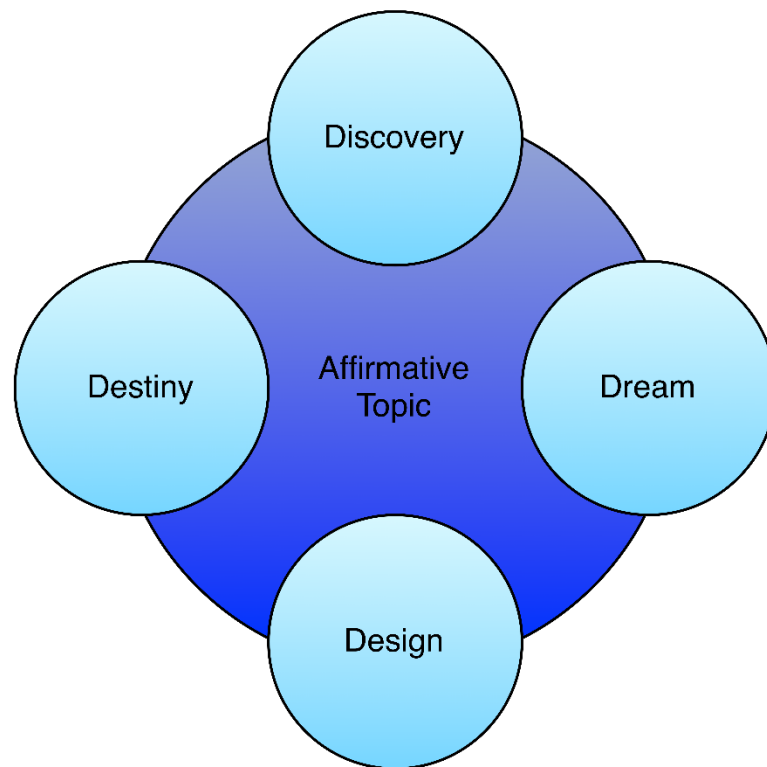


Figure 3.2: The Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle. Adapted from *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change* (p. 16) by D. Cooperrider & D. Whitney. Copyright (2005) by San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, INC.

I focussed on *Discovery*, *Dream*, and *Design* stages during the interview process.

- **Discovery:** This phase is an extensive, cooperative search for the best and most positive experiences participants had in their organisation.
- **Dream:** This phase engages and energizes the participants into thinking creatively about the future.

- **Design:** This phase poses a set of provocative propositions about what the ideal organization should be. It reflects participants' views of good practice and what they desire to achieve.
- **Destiny:** This is the final phase of the Appreciative Inquiry approach. It focuses on *what will be* in the organization through personal and organizational commitments and action planning.

The *Dream*, *Discovery*, and *Design* phases of the Appreciative Inquiry process enabled me to identify and probe into the positive core of student leadership, and to uncover and bring forth the existing strengths within the organization of the participants.

The fundamental assumption of Appreciative Inquiry is that every human system whether an individual, an organization, a group, or a community has something that works right (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). Unlike computers or machines that are non-human systems, people get demoralized when they are seen as problems to be solved. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on the root cause of success and then builds on these root causes to create future success.

Appreciative Inquiry is about constructing meaning through the telling of powerful stories. It has an emphasis on metaphor and narrative, relational ways of knowing, on language, and on its potential as a source of generative theory (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). This research was about meaning-making. It was an inquiry into the times, places, and experiences that held the greatest meaning for the Graduate Student Leaders, reaching for an understanding of what was happening in their leadership when things worked and were at their best.

Description of the Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used for this study was a comprehensive interview guide. An interview guide is helpful in eliciting answers about processes and meanings. It is a useful way to pose specific questions and to get details, examples, and contexts. The comprehensive interview guide (see Appendix A) that I used for this study constituted the following six parts, as recommended by Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2010, pp. 152-153). Appreciative Inquiry focuses on what organizations do best; therefore, the questions were designed to draw out the richest experiences, extract, and identify the issues and concepts that contributed to the participants' success as Graduate Student Leaders.

1. Introductory texts —used to set the stage of the interview.
2. Stage setting questions —used to build rapport and elicit information about the interviewee.
3. Topic questions—in-depth and ‘lead-in’ questions.
4. Concluding questions—these wrap up the interview.
5. Summary sheets—repository for the best stories, quotes, and ideas.
6. Quick action sheets—they collect items for immediate attention.

Research Method: Appreciative Interviews

Consistent with the stated purpose of the study, I employed appreciative individual and focus group interviews to gather data for the study. The process of appreciative interviewing which is narrative based and geared towards envisioning bold possibilities, was the most likely to generate meaningful data with regard to the research questions. Appreciative interviews are seen as a non-negotiable component of the Appreciative Inquiry process (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The discovery phase, which is the first of the four stage cycle of AI, revolves around

appreciative interviews. The discovery phases involved writing interview questions and creating an interview guide which stimulated a variety of ideas on how to get to the best of what student leadership was about. Appreciative interviews involve questions that probe for best experiences, personal values, life-giving energy sources, and wishes for the future (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) the interview questions are developed around the affirmative topic(s) selected for study. The appreciative interviews provided opportunities for individuals to share stories that “illuminate distinctive strengths and potentials” (p. 143). Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) outlined three necessary factors in structuring appreciative interview questions. First, they indicated that primarily, effective appreciative interview questions should develop from the title of the affirmative topic. The interviewer or researcher is seen as a detective trying to uncover and understand where the topic exists and how it can exist to a greater degree (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Second, appreciative interview questions require a “lead- in” that introduces the topic. During the interview process I used “lead-in” questions that took on a half full rather than half empty assumption, describing the topic to the interviewee at its best. Third, the appreciative interview included a set of sub-questions, usually two or three, that explore different aspects of the topic. Participants were asked, for example, to describe a time when they did something meaningful as student leaders and to state who was involved in that process. The appreciative interview questions were focussed on the past, the present, and the future. These time frames were necessary to allow the interviewee to reflect and navigate their experiences, as well as to imagine the possibilities of a positive future (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

The interview questions for this research were designed to enable the students to convey the attitudes and practices that are most effective in exemplary leadership as well as to capture the values that drive strategic vision. Appreciative interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection for this study because of the researcher's intent to focus on valuing *what is* and *can be* in student leadership, instead of identifying a problem and analysing the cause or causes for the problem. The appreciative interview questions that were designed for this research enabled an evolutionary search for the best in the participants and by extension the graduate student leadership organization.

Individual Interviews: My Engagement with the Participants

Upon receiving approval from the advisory committee on Ethics in Behavioral Science and Research, each participant was asked to sign a consent form representing their voluntary participation in the study (see Appendix B). I had a transforming experience in the process of trying to capture the participants' leadership orientations, experiences, and stories. In this process of discovery, the participants openly communicated their leadership journeys, their vulnerabilities, their motivations, their desires, and their strengths. The participants, regardless of their impossible schedules, graciously accommodated my interviews and eagerly responded to my e-mails. During the interview sessions with each of the participants I noticed that they were fully engaged in the data collection process, their energy was high, they were consumed in the discussion and they emphatically accounted for their most positive leadership experiences, as well as their convictions and conceptualizations of leadership development. The participants shared individual and collective experiences in their interview sessions and showed their commitment to the data gathering process by asking me if I needed more from them.

I conducted five individual interviews, each of which lasted approximately one hour and forty five minutes. This process resulted in approximately ten hours of audio-taped interviews which I transcribed verbatim. As was agreed upon by the participants, each received a transcript of his or her interview via email and was directed to indicate whether what was transcribed matched what he or she intended. The participants were asked to delete anything that they wished not to be further examined, and to expand on anything they desired to present their perceptions as accurately as possible. After this process, I met each participant face-to-face to sign a data release form (see Appendix C).

I had follow-up interviews with some of the participants after initial data analysis in order to get into the multiple dimensions of the issue and to unlock a more comprehensive understanding of their perception of the leadership phenomenon. This process also followed the ethical requirement of signing a data release form after the information on the transcripts was verified by the participants.

Focus Group Interviews: A Deeper Engagement

I employed the method of focus group interviews in an effort to peel away the layers of the participants' perceptions of the phenomena of leadership and leadership development. Morgan (1993) noted that "the hallmark of a focus group is the explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (p. 12). Furthermore, focus groups are useful in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chawick, 2008; Morgan, 1998). Of the five participants, three were invited to participate in a focus group session. The three participants were invited based on their expressed desire to further participate in the study and their openness to share stories about their leadership journey. This process of interviewing

provided a rich understanding of the participants' beliefs about leadership, and their shared experiences as members of the same executive body allowed them comfort and familiarity with each other. The rationale for using a focus group in this study was to gather data on perspectives of leadership and leadership development based on a collective voice, to allow the participants to ponder each other's responses, to carefully think about their own perspectives in the context of another's point of view, and to make additional responses to questions posed by other participants in the group.

During the focus group session, the participants were engaged in conversations about their leadership experiences, and their social orientations towards leadership. I designed the interview questions to stimulate thoughts about the positive dimension of leadership, best leadership experiences according to the participants, and their perceptions of leadership development. Though the interview process was emergent, eight questions (see Appendix A) were carefully designed to elicit information about the ways in which the participants collaborated as leaders, the factors that contributed to their leadership maturity, the lessons they learned in their leadership, and how those lessons or experiences could benefit or enhance the leadership experiences of other individuals. The focus group interview session lasted for approximately two hours. In the focus group session the participants were energetic, enthusiastic, and interactive. I found it inspiring the way they respectfully challenged each other, collaborated with each other, and appraised each other's way of leading.

The participants involved in the focus group session were asked to sign a letter of consent, outlining the confidentiality requirements of the participants who are involved in focus group interviews (see Appendix D). Similar to the process I employed with the individual interviews, I transcribed the focus group interviews verbatim, and provided the transcripts to all

the participants. The participants were also provided with the data release forms upon their approval of the information recorded in the transcripts.

Sampling Technique

In a qualitative study the sample comprises individuals who will be studied and/or from whom data will be collected (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). I employed purposeful sampling in selecting the participants for the study. According to Patton (1990) “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth” (p. 169); he continued by highlighting that “[i]nformation-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 169). The participants in the research included members of the graduate student executive. I chose to use the members of the executive body in order to get an in-depth description of what they consider to be their best practices as student leaders based on their direct engagement in the decision making process of policies and procedures at their university.

At the time of data collection, all the participants were Graduate Student Leaders from the same university who held an executive position in their student association. They were all involved in leadership prior to their ascension to the executive level of their organization. Their leadership was voluntary and they all managed a full-time academic time table, attended regular meetings with the administration of the university, and actively represented over 3,500 students at the graduate level. Of the five participants, four were pursuing studies at the Doctoral level and one at the Masters level.

Overview of the Participants’ Organization: Structure, Purpose, and Values

In order to present the reader with a clear idea of the participants’ roles as Graduate Student Leaders in their university, I provide a brief structure of their organization. The

participants' in this research are graduate students who are executive members of their student organization of a university in a western Canadian province. The student organization is the voice of graduate students on the university campus, provincially, and nationally.

The organization has a governing structure that is democratic in nature. All graduate students are members of the organization and are therefore afforded the right to vote in elections and at general meetings. This general membership is the highest decision making body of the organization. The executive members of the graduate student organization are elected by and accountable to the general membership, and act under the direction of council members. Council members are nominated by graduate departments who are then confirmed by the graduate student association council. The executive members are the official voice of representation for graduate students. They depend on the involvement of graduate students and seek to engage them by organizing a number of social, cultural and academic activities that can enrich and broaden their graduate experiences.

Their mission is to cultivate a positive experience for graduate students through academic and non-academic activities, to advocate for the unique needs of graduate students, to foster a cohesive graduate student community, and to build positive relationships among graduate students and with other organizations. They provide advocacy, including personal support and advising for individual grievances at the department and college level. Of equal importance is the non-academic life of the graduate student. As such advocacy is also provided for discrimination, harassment, and working conditions.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) asserted that the qualitative researcher tries “to analyse the data with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed” (p. 5). In essence, the process of data analysis is to “make sense” or to make meaning out of the data (Merriam, 2009). This process includes consolidating, reducing and organizing the data into categories, themes or codes in order to arrive at the findings of the study (Merriam, 2009).

The analysis of qualitative data for this study began in the field, at the time of interviewing, as I identified concepts that appeared likely to help in understanding the phenomenon. Figure 3. 3 outlines the various steps that were taken to gather and analyse the data that led to the knowledge-rich findings and interpretations represented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

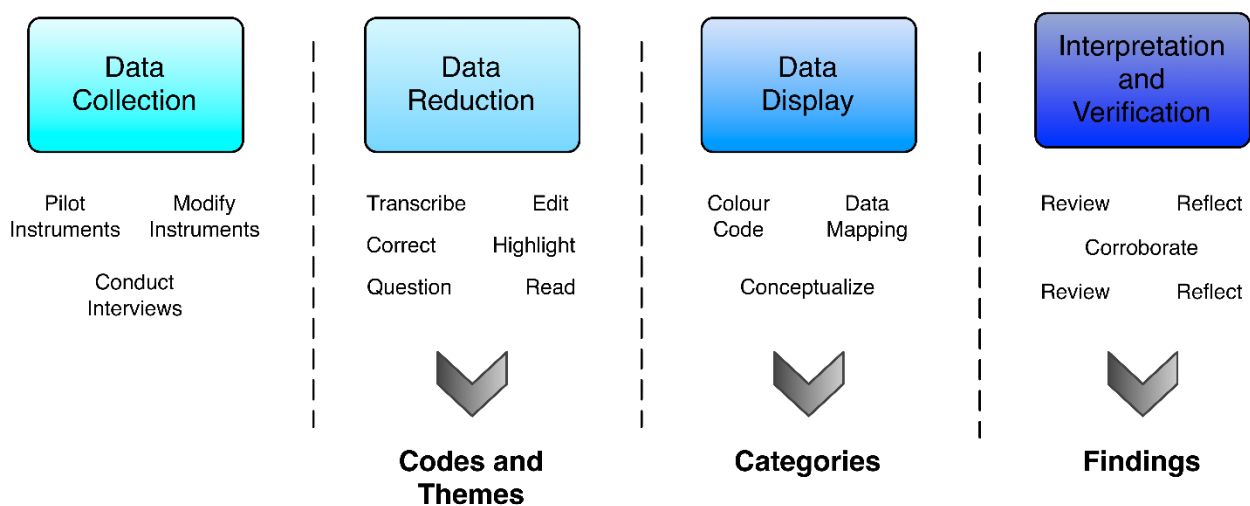


Figure 3.3: The process of data analysis

Data Collection

Upon receiving approval from University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Sciences Research Ethics Board, the participants were contacted via email (see Appendix E) and were asked to participate in individual and focus group interviews in order to explain their perspectives on their most positive leadership experiences. Before the interviews were conducted, I decided to pilot the interview questions in order to clarify the terms of the research, test the language and substance of the questions, and to improve the overall field process. One sample appropriate participant that met the delimitations requirements participated in the pilot interview. Piloting the interview questions revealed that the questions needed to be expanded to gather more data on the students' leadership experiences. As such, more questions to elicit these responses were added. Additionally, the piloting process revealed that the interview questions needed to be a little less structured, in order to allow space for discussions and clarifications. I modified the questions accordingly.

Data Reduction: Developing Codes and Themes

Miles and Huberman (1994) related that data usually require some form of processing by way of transcribing, editing, and correcting prior to analysis. I transcribed the recorded interviews and then reviewed and corrected each interview transcript. The interview data seemed voluminous and it appeared daunting to corral the data in orderly themes. In order to overcome this challenge, I organized the transcribed data around the research questions.

After the transcribing and organizing the data, I employed open coding for initial data analysis. Open coding involved reading and re-reading transcripts, and commenting on the data by making notations in the margins of the transcripts, underlining, highlighting, and questioning responses. Consistent with Corbin and Strauss' (1998) method for analysing data, I coded each

participant's responses a paragraph at a time and then phrase by phrase. During the coding process I searched for the main idea in a paragraph. I also examined the paragraphs in relation to leadership concepts and leadership qualities. I systematically assigned short descriptors to each paragraph (for example, cultural inclusivity, respecting decisions, positive thinking, and compassion) and where an idea in a particular paragraph was the same, it would be assigned the same descriptor. I then checked to see how many times the descriptors I assigned were repeated or similar. If a particular descriptor was repeated two or more times, that particular descriptor would become a theme.

Data Display: Developing Categories

“Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions, and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). The process of qualitative data analysis should therefore reflect an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of the data in which the analyst becomes an active participant, and the result of the analysis is a rich description of the participants' worlds. In this regard, I wrote themes and insightful excerpts from the transcripts on huge colour coded cartridge papers. I refer to this process as *colour coding*. The colours represented each individual interview transcript and the focus group transcript. I then displayed those coloured cartridge papers in a private spot, like hanging photos on a wall (see Appendix F). This process was employed to note the relationships and connections among the participants' perceptions of the phenomena of leadership and leadership development.

Each time I examined my hanging data on the wall, I got a snapshot of the concept, or the leadership experience my participants were trying to relate both individually and collectively. I refer to this process as *data mapping*. During this iterative, recursive, and interactive process I

tried to understand the perspectives of my participants, “how they make sense of their worlds, themselves, others and how these meanings were shaped” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 59). The process of *data mapping* led to the formulation of meaningful concepts. Strauss and Corbin (1998) related that “once concepts begin to accumulate, the analyst should begin the process of grouping them or categorizing them under more abstract explanatory terms, that is, categories” (p. 114). Accordingly, I created categories. The categories represented the broader, overarching idea of the participants’ perceptions. The themes were then carefully re-examined in order to ensure their relationship among the categories. That is, I consistently examined how closely a particular theme related to a category. The result of this process was the emergence of insights and tentative hypotheses into the participants’ perceptions of the phenomena of leadership and leadership development.

Interpretation and Verification: Reporting the Findings

The final phase of data analysis addressed the interpretive process. In this phase, I reviewed descriptions, themes, and categories in order to explore the possible meanings and connections. I examined each theme, going back and forth through transcripts to ensure that the theme was represented more than once or by more than one individual. I used the participants’ words and phrases as themes as much as possible in order to lend even more authenticity to the interpretation. I then sought corroboration, by evaluating alternative explanations. As part of this process, I shared the data with my participants, seeking their opinion on my categorizations and thematic selections. Further, I commissioned an interpretation panel to provide me with alternative interpretations. My interpretation panel consisted of four students enrolled in a doctoral programme from various departments in the university. All the students were familiar with the leadership literature and had been student leaders at some point in their academic

experience. The interpretation panel and I met and examined aspects of the data, the preliminary interpretation of my findings, talked about situations that were unclear, and challenged assumptions. The outcomes of the interpretation panel were fresh insights and an expansion or elaboration of my preliminary interpretation of the findings. The insights provided from the interpretation panel are represented in Chapters Five and Six.

I carefully reflected on the interpretation panel session by reading and re-reading the transcripts from the session. I examined the new insights that I gained from the panel members and re-read the participants' transcripts to ensure that these insights could be supported by the participants' words. I then carefully reflected on all the processes I employed to ensure that I was adequately representing the actual field process. These processes assisted in refining the concepts during the report writing phase of the study. A further description of the interpretation panel process is included in the section on ensuring credibility.

Ethical Issues: Forming Relationships and Ensuring Anonymity

Smith (1990) noted that ethics relates to how one treats those involved in the research, and how the relationships formed between the researcher and the participants may depart from some conception of an ideal. He further added that inquiry "should not harm the subjects of that inquiry" and that "the two most important principles for the protection of the human subjects are informed consent and anonymity" (p. 260). For this study, I developed a meaningful relationship with my participants, which was characterized by openness, truth, and camaraderie (see further explanations in Chapter Four). I had the privilege of meeting the president of the student organization in an informal session at his university. He appeared rather positive and engaging and encouraged me to contact him if I had any concerns about any student related matter or any suggestions for, or criticisms about the organization. As a result, it was rather easy to ask him

and his team to participate in my research. I had a good rapport with the team both during and after the data collection phases of the study. During data collection, my participants were on time for both their individual and focus group interviews and were eager to relate their experiences. After the data collection phase, whenever I came into contact with the participants they asked me about my research, expressed their interest in my progress, and gave words of encouragement. Additionally, my participants asked me to volunteer to work on their team for an initiation session that they planned for the new and returning members of their organization. I was honoured and expressed my appreciation to be part of that event. My interaction with them resulted in a relationship of mutual respect and appreciation.

In accordance with Smith's cautionary expression on anonymity in qualitative research, I informed the participants of the purpose of the study, as well as how the findings would be communicated. I also informed the participants that all the information communicated will be presented anonymously. Additionally, I followed the procedures outlined by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Sciences Research Ethics Board regarding the guidelines concerning consent, confidentiality, right to withdraw participation in a study, and opportunity for feedback. The participants were also asked to sign a data release form, authorizing dissemination of the data as outlined in the consent letter.

Ensuring Credibility: Steps towards Verisimilitude

The reliability of qualitative research is often questioned because of its naturalistic approach to gathering data. Unlike the positivist research that presents a "world of variables and static states" (Firestone, 1987, p. 210) which are measurable and replicable, qualitative research presents a thick, rich description of the individuals in events in order to show that the conclusions "make sense" (Firestone, 1987). That is, qualitative research employs a different

rhetoric in order to convince readers of its trustworthiness. Several researchers, including Creswell (1998), Lincoln and Guba (2000), Merriam (2009), Noonan (2002), and Silverman (2000) outlined several steps that can be taken to increase the credibility of the findings in a qualitative study. In an attempt to present a holistic interpretation of the findings I have utilized the following verification procedures.

Thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Creswell (1998) suggested that detailed description of the research phenomenon promotes credibility as it helps the findings to “ring true” when the researcher conveys the actual situation that was investigated. I presented the participants’ perspectives with rich, thick details so as to give the reader a strong sense of the setting, as well as enable the reader to enter into the research context. For the most part, the excerpts were presented verbatim. There were only a few minor grammatical edits, and pseudonyms were only used to protect the identity of the participants and to prevent the reader from tracing the participants’ organization.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity or the researcher’s position is “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, ‘the human instrument’” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). In order to ensure trustworthiness of my findings I consciously and continuously monitored my own developing constructions. In order to facilitate this process, I kept an interview journal and wrote down and questioned my own biases, preconceptions, and assumptions during the research process. I constantly reflected on my interaction with the participants because “the researcher affects the participants and the research process, just as the researcher is affected by the participants and the research process” (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009, p. 89). Additionally, as noted in Chapter One of this study, I acknowledged and accounted for my biases, dispositions and

assumptions. These clarifications are intended to allow the reader to understand how my values may impact the conclusions of the study (Merriam, 2009).

Member checking. Lincoln and Guba (2000) considered member checking to be the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. The process of member checking provided the opportunity for corrections and clarifications. Participants were asked to check for accuracy of the data at the end of the data collection process. Additionally, participants of the focus group were asked to read the transcript of dialogues in which they participated in order to ensure that their words matched what they intended. I conducted member checks with all of the interviewees in this study.

Peer scrutiny of the research project. Merriam (2009) suggested that the researcher should invite colleagues to scan the raw data to assess whether findings are plausible based on the data since closeness with the project can inhibit the researcher's ability to examine the research with detachment. For this study, I provided opportunities for scrutiny of the project by colleagues, peers, and academics. This exercise provided fresh perspectives, as well as provided the space for individuals to challenge my assumptions. The questions that were asked during this process were used as a tool to provide greater explanation of the design, thereby strengthening the arguments and trustworthiness of the study.

Interpretation panel. In an effort to authenticate my interpretations, I continually revisited my own assumptions, biases and preconceptions. I refused to be a solo analyst and so I employed an interpretation panel to provide me with alternative interpretations. The process of using an interpretation panel is based on research by Noonan (2002). Noonan noted that an interpretation panel in collaborative research can result in more meaningful interpretations of the findings. An interpretation panel can also serve to reduce the possibility of researcher bias,

thereby resulting in more credible and balanced interpretation of the data. Accordingly, four graduate students were purposefully selected and were presented with verbatim quotations and extracts from the data so as to allow them to arrive at their own interpretations. These individuals were selected because they were all involved in student leadership in their undergraduate or graduate academic studies, and were also familiar with the leadership literature. The panel members were provided with possible dates to meet. Once all the individuals agreed upon participation, date, and time, the meeting was convened. The interpretation panel session lasted approximately two hours. I recorded the process. However, panelists were not presented with transcripts as the purpose of the interpretation panel was not to gather data, rather to aid in the interpretive phase of the study.

The session began with an overview of the research process, a description of the research context, background, purpose, questions, and significance of the study. The panel members were provided with a copy of the research questions and interview questions for reference. Importantly, the panelists were asked some guiding questions to focus the discussion and to provide a platform from which further discussions could take place. However, panel members were encouraged to provide any insight or raise any issue that they thought needed attention or further clarification. For each extract or excerpt that was presented I asked the panel members: What is that resonates with you in this extract? Why? What are the implications of these statements? These questions were sufficient to guide the discussion and generate meaningful conversations about the data.

Interestingly, panel members tended to agree with the points that their fellow members presented and mostly elaborated on points that others raised. There was no instance of conflicted opinions or interpretations. For the most part, the panel members elaborated on my preliminary

findings, offered fresh insights, and stated possible conclusions to the data presented. The insights gleaned from the interpretation panel were carefully examined in relation to the data of the participants. Notably, the panel members indicated that they appreciated the process, benefitted from the experience, and gained much knowledge of other individuals' perceptions of the leadership phenomenon.

Examination of previous research findings. Silverman (2000) suggested that the ability of the researcher to compare his/her findings to an existing body of knowledge is an important factor in ensuring credibility in qualitative research. Accordingly, I examined the findings of this study with other research that was done that dealt with similar methodology, topic, themes, and concepts.

Summary

This chapter presented an examination of the research design and the research genres used in the study. It further describes the instruments used in the data collection process and explains the sampling procedures. The researcher also outlines the major activities used in the investigation and explains how the data collected was analysed. The chapter terminates with an explanation of the ethical issues, as well the issues of trustworthiness that were represented in the research. The following chapter presents the participants' stories of their most positive leadership experiences and perceptions of leadership development.

CHAPTER FOUR

Level 1 Data: The Stories Unfold

It is a fundamental rule in life that if the approach is good, the response is good (Nehru).

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. This purpose was accomplished by tapping into the accounts and exemplary actions of the participants and by reaching for an understanding of what was happening in the participants' leadership experiences when they were most effective and engaged. The data collected through appreciative individual and focus group interviews provided a considerable volume of information on Graduate Students' leadership perceptions. According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) the practice of appreciative interviewing "evokes hopes and dreams for the future and generates life-giving possibilities" (p. 57). Indeed, the appreciative interviews for this study involved purposefully affirmative conversations which ultimately elicited affirmative possibilities.

The appreciative individual and focus group interviews were categorized and analyzed to determine if there were recurrent themes and categories. The interviews were recorded, and then transcribed verbatim. After this process, participants were presented with their transcripts to add, delete or elaborate as they deemed necessary. In order to present the richness of the participants' leadership experiences I engaged in multiple dialogues with the data. I found myself sifting out ideas, pulling apart and then putting back together, cross-referencing, questioning, and weighing notions of what I thought I was seeing as against what could actually be there. During the process, there were moments of jubilation, exasperation and confusion as I developed a kind of

sensitivity to the text and examined the relationships between contexts in order to arrive at the meaning of the “inside” perspective of the leadership phenomenon.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that “words when organized into meaningful stories are far more convincing than pages of numbers” (p. 1). The constructionist-interpretivist perspectives that I employed in the method of data collection and analysis revealed the success factors, beliefs, convictions, insights, and perspectives which the participants embraced. I, therefore, dedicate this chapter to telling of the participants’ individual and collective leadership experiences by focusing on the critical leadership incidents in their lives, as well as relating the situations that they felt had the most impact in their leadership journey. As each participant’s stories were told, they were supported by comments from other participants in the individual and focus group interview sessions. I used this method in order for the reader to gain insights into both the individual and collective leadership experiences of the participants, as well as to provide convergent evidence of the findings.

The participants were a unique mix of different people, who held different positions on the executive, and lead in different ways. However, they were similar in their convictions, their motivations, and their drive to serve. When I expressed my gratitude for their participation and time, they unanimously declared that they saw it as service, as living up to their mandate, as an obligation. Those expressions did not resonate with me until I sat and listened to them speak as a group and individually. The quality and depth of their leadership was reflected in their relationships with others and the value that they place on their roles. I used the following pseudonyms in reference to them: Simone, Paul, Henry, Karen, and Melissa.

Organization of Chapter

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section of the chapter presents Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences. This section represents "an extensive, cooperative search to understand the best of what is and what has been" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 7) in the participants' leadership experiences. The second section of the chapter relates the participants' conceptualizations of leadership development. This section relates how the participants envisioned their most innovative and desired views of what leadership development should entail. The participants' perceptions of leadership and leadership development were presented through their individual stories of their leadership journey, stories about working together as a team in their organization, their convictions of what leadership should be, and the anecdotes that they shared about their process of maturity. Following the participants' excerpts, I briefly elaborate on the initial findings of the study. I also present a brief summary at the end of each subsection.

Part One: Participants' Perceptions of Leadership

The participants' perceptions of leadership are presented in the framework of three major categories. These categories are comprised of the themes that emerged from the coding process as diagrammed in Figure 4.1. The three main categories consist of leadership as "being," leadership as "learning," and leadership as "doing." The circles are intertwined to suggest that each category represents a distinct but interconnected constellation of perceptions about leadership that informed the participants' thoughts, desires, convictions, and actions.

A theme was selected based on the frequency of responses generated by any one or more participants, or an idea, experience or concept reflected by two or more participants. Narrative excerpts were chosen based on their ability to sufficiently communicate the central idea in the

theme and the categories. During the coding a process a theme emerged that did not quite fit into any of the major categories. I referred to this theme as an “outlier.” This outlier represents a contrasting or dissonant view when examined in relation to the overarching perspectives of the participants. It does not refer to a statistical finding; neither does it have a quantitative dimension. This outlier supported my perspective that individuals like organizations are quite “complex and the diagnostic categories less well-defined” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 12). It was, therefore, important to examine this “outlier” as it might have been a window of insight or a key to unlock what was truly present in the participants’ revelations of their leadership understandings.

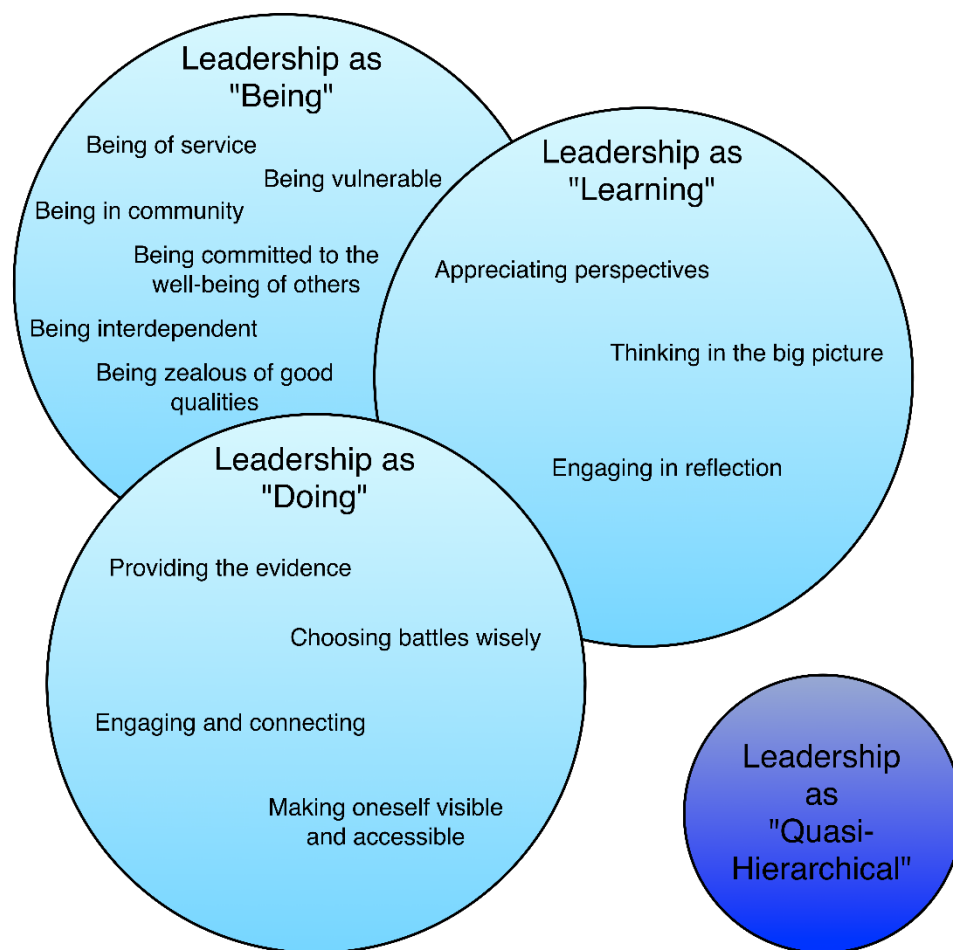


Figure 4.1: A summary of the participants’ perceptions of leadership

Leadership as “Being”

The category of leadership as “being” reflects the expressed vulnerability and authenticity of the participants. The concept “being” refers to *who you are* and highlights the emotional dimension of leadership. Leadership as “being” suggests a radical shift from the traditionally accepted view of leadership as a mechanical, emotionally detached process of “being” in control, ultra-rational and results-driven. It represents a more emotionally intelligent, mindful and connective style of leadership which involves individuals perceiving leadership as “being” of service, “being” vulnerable, “being” in community, “being” dependent, “being” committed to the “well-being” of others, and “being” zealous of good leadership qualities in other individuals. The results gleaned from the data suggest that the participants perceive their leadership as positive when they are serving or protecting the best interests of other individuals. This motivation to protect others results in an uncloaking of the “authentic” self and a projection of interdependence, thereby showing other individuals that leaders are real persons who possess the same passions and who have the desire to belong and be a part of something greater than themselves.

“Being” of Service: Advocating for a Cause Bigger than Self

The desire to advocate for a cause bigger than self was the predominant theme participants expressed regarding their perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences. Simone related the internal conflict that she had within herself when she was campaigning for her post on the executive. She said that she felt that her campaign was a selfish act. She described the inner turmoil of questioning herself and trying to find a motive that was not related to fulfilling her own desires. She referred to that period as a “conflict of interest” within herself. She knew that she wanted to help, but she also knew that her campaign at that time was not

related to wanting to help but to fulfilling her own desires. She stated that she felt engaged in her leadership when she identified a cause that had nothing to do with her, but was related to the greater good of the wider student population. Simone explained by saying that,

So, I was leading the [travel mode poll] (my pseudonym) last year so I hope you aren't mad that it passed because that was me. Anyway, so I really believed in it and I believed in it for multiple reasons. I mean I feel very deeply about my city. I feel deeply about my country worldwide, climate change like getting a bus pass is a good thing. Plus for students who can't afford a regular bus pass this is really important. And I actually just got my car a couple of days ago, because I couldn't afford to have a car and a bus pass. But what engaged me the most is that other people wanted it so I wasn't speaking for myself and what I wanted but I also knew that I had 600 people that signed this petition that wanted it. And it was so much easier to argue with someone, or argue or convince or just have dialogue about an issue that was bigger than me that I knew more people wanted. When I was campaigning for this position I felt like it was so personal and that it was really hard to say hey, you should vote for me because I was this and that. And I felt like it was all about me. So, I struggled with it. I kept on asking myself "why should I vote for you, because I'd like the position, because I think I could be good for you, how do I know what you want? It was like a conflict of interest within myself. Whereas with the bus pass it was very clear. It was not for me. I knew for sure I was helping people. I knew it was not selfish, so I felt deeply engaged because it was more than just something I wanted for myself (Individual Interview) (INI).

One compelling element in Simone's perspective about leadership was her view that leadership is essentially serving others. Simone understands that she, as an individual, was not all that

important. The story she related suggested that she felt that pursuing her own desires was not emotionally satisfying for her, and neither would it resonate with others around her. For Simone, unless she could identify a definite cause, one from which she was not necessarily benefitting, then her service was disingenuous.

Simone ended her story by saying “it was more than just something I wanted for myself.” Paradoxically, it was by exclusion of self that Simone felt most engaged. It was by taking herself out of the story that she became involved within the wider story. Simone espoused a civic-minded philosophy. She believed in people, and in serving their needs. Simone’s civic-minded nature was further credited by her colleagues in the focus group interviews. Paul, when queried about his understanding of exceptional leadership, quickly highlighted Simone’s sense of common good and the value that she brought to the organization. He related:

If I may say, I think Simone has a better sense of common good than most of us when I saw how she was committed to the [travel mode poll]. It’s something that she doesn’t need as much as she acted it. She could go without that service but she thought it was going to be good for students and rightly so. She has a sense of common good you know. That some people rarely have. They are more interested in just what directly benefits them and if it doesn’t benefit them then they don’t see the need to give it time and commitment. I remember when she told us that we have to personally contribute money. She doesn’t do it to get popularity (Focus Group Interview) (FGI)

Simone’s passionate promotion of a cause was having an effect on those around her and was igniting a desire in others to become like her. For Simone, leadership happened when she released the passion of her service towards others.

Karen and Melissa also expressed the philosophy of advocating for a greater cause. Karen noted that “the whole purpose of [our work] here is serving the needs of students. The students make up whatever we are so whatever we do is to represent their needs, whether it is behind the scenes work or fighting for something we have a high demand for” (INI). In referring to the work of her colleagues, Karen related, “I think we all come together for that same cause, we are not doing this for our own personal benefit. We are benefitting a larger group. Having that common ground helps” (INI). Melissa, in the individual interview, expressed how she and her colleagues saw themselves as leaders. She stated that, “[We] recognize and believe that we are in it not for the betterment of ourselves but the students.”

The participants’ comments suggested that they understood leadership to be a subjugation of their own desires. They saw leadership as a conscious decision based on a compelling passion to serve the best interest and needs of the people they were leading. “Being” of service to others accurately represented their leadership rhetoric and was revealed as a foundational dimension of their most positive leadership experiences.

“Being” Vulnerable: Leading with Compassion

Simone’s perceptions of her positive leadership experiences were embedded in her being “in tune” with the feelings of others. Her ability to show sincere, heartfelt consideration for those whom she served made her more attentive to the needs of others in her leadership practices. In the focus group interview, she responded to Paul and Henry’s comments about being hard working and dedicated in order to reach a high level of excellence by saying, “You can’t have hard work, if you don’t have compassion. You can’t be dedicated if you don’t care.” Simone seamlessly expressed how she willingly brought the basic human emotion into her role, how she

expressed vulnerability and by doing so communicated more effectively. She expressed that brokenness affected her and when it did, she uncontrollably cried with people.

When I look back, I would say that expressing compassion helped a lot in my leadership. So [this student] moved here and she is from a very liberal family. So like when you are born in [a country where Muslim is the primary religion] you are forced to declare that you are a Muslim or else your life may be terminated. So she is sitting in my office crying, because she is living with her brother and his wife. The wife doesn't want her [at their house] anymore. She needs to find housing. She has been waiting since January to get into housing [in one of the university residences]. No one is giving her straight answers. It's just ridiculous. And something terrible happened to her. Now between you and me, you can probably imagine what happened to her. And I am trying so hard to hold back my tears. She is not wearing a veil; she's got arms and ankles showing, and I am like, "So do you think that is why your brother's wife wants you gone, because she is more traditional than you are?" So, I tried so hard and finally got her housing but like I was crying with her and I was saying to myself "I am not gonna make a good leader if I keep crying with people." But I just couldn't stop. Then she emailed me after she got the housing and told me that no one ever treated her like a real person except for me. See, I am crying now just thinking about it. So she invited me to her dormitory for dinner and showed me pictures of her and her friends back [home] inside, wearing short dresses and drinking booze. But outside they would have scarves and jeans. So this was emotional for me.... So I just feel like I connected with her on a very personal level (INI).

Simone's narration about her deep feelings of compassion for individuals was an indicator of what she thought brought life to her leadership. Simone had a deep understanding of this

student's emotional state. Her comments suggested that she lead with heart and understood that people are at first humans. Simone's compassion was not a mere emotional response but a commitment to action. Her deep compassion for this student was characterized not only by the emotional expression of tears, but also by the physical action of working steadfast to find appropriate accommodation for her.

Simone told another story which showed how her compassionate nature enabled her to engage in connected conversations with others. She continued by saying,

And I am sure that is not the first time. I used to work at service Canada. It's in the federal government. So I would issue SIN cards and EI employment for people. And to do that you would have to be very strong. So I mean not all the time I could make connections with people but I treated them as people. I went above and beyond my job. I was supposed to provide them with government information, but if they needed help I would show them how to find apartments or how to find jobs or where to go for support. And the only time I ever cried at work and it's kind of the same story. It was this guy, he is an African and I can't remember exactly where he was from. It was about five years ago. But he moved here to Saskatoon and I believe that was his first stop in Canada, so he came here. He had a wife and two young kids. The wife died suddenly and he was working at this place where they make like farm houses, big industrial place. Anyways, he got hurt at work and his hand swelled up and he had to leave. And he told the boss, "Hey, I hurt my hand, like, am gonna go home." So he didn't phone in sick the next day cause it was obvious that his hand was like really hurt. So he didn't go to work and he got fired because he didn't show up for work. So he is trying to claim EI. And granted someone would have probably looked at his file and gave him EI but he didn't know

there was Workers' Compensation. He didn't know that if he get hurt at work that we would pay him. So he is telling me about his kids and that he got his family to feed. It was so sad that I cried. I don't think I cried in front of him. But as soon as he left, I went in the back and I cried. I work there for about three years and I dealt with a lot of stuff and I just cry. I don't know, but my thing as a leader is that I really care about people (INI).

Simone's compassion made her receptive and responsive to others. She was not tied to the mechanical process of doing only what the job description dictated but "went above and beyond" and treated people like people. In this case, members of the interpretation panel suggested that the expression of tears was healing for her and could be viewed as a coping mechanism. Simone's feelings of compassionate connection with others compelled her to help, and gave her the inspiration to make a difference in people's lives.

Simone's compassionate nature was also given credence by her colleagues in the focus group interview. Henry referred to her as someone who "cares," someone who is very "sociable," who is "fun to be with." In his appraisal of her, he ended by saying, "She is a gem. We really like her leadership." Paul injected, "I like Simone so well and I wouldn't want her to be bounced out." The comments made about her by her colleagues suggested that Simone showed sincere, heartfelt consideration for others. These traits were admired by her colleagues who also perceived her compassion as strength to the organization as a wider entity.

Simone's leadership experiences emphasized attention to and respect for the emotional dimension. She was awake to her own feelings and conveyed those feelings authentically, which caused others to open up their personal lives to her. Her compassionate nature made her go

above what was expected of her and was the defining feature of who she was and was becoming as a leader.

“Being” in Community: “No More Giant Monopolies”

Another dominant theme that emerged was community-building. Simone and other participants identified functioning in communities as necessary to having a positive leadership experience. Simone and other members of the executive, when asked what they require most in order to have a more positive experience in their leadership positions spoke of how community building would facilitate such a need. Simone envisioned the creation of communities in her leadership Utopia. She communicated,

In my leadership Utopia, there would be so much diversity in programmes or services. If I was like the queen of the city or province or something I would want to have so much different things going on, different economies. I would want to build communities that are small scale so everyone kind of have their hand in it. No more giant monopolies and I mean that in the ideological sense and business sense to have all different pockets. I would want to create little pockets of communities. I told you earlier that I think in a bigger theme. Yeah and I guess, if we hit a road block in my little Utopia, then we would have to find an alternative (INI).

Other participants discussed how fundamental community was for their leadership and for other students to have a positive graduate school experience. Karen expressed that “research and study are lonely tasks, we need, as leaders, to provide a feeling of family and home for graduate students, creating a sense of community is important to our well-being” (INI). Furthermore, Karen embraced the idea of celebrating students as a means of creating communities. She emphasized this by adding, “We can create communities by celebrating, celebrating families,

celebrating having children, because a lot of graduate students have children. I don't think those requirements have been met" (INI).

The participants, as reflected in their comments, wished to create a space where graduate students can have a home, a family away from home. They wanted it to be a place where individuals could feel free to express their views and a place where students would feel protected and cared for. Karen further expressed how important the idea of a community was to the leadership of their student organization.

We see ourselves as enablers of a community environment. We are here to facilitate the sharing of experiences. Though our job description may not necessarily state that we should find friends for graduate students, but if that can be facilitated by finding students or having students that face a common problem introduce themselves to each other, then, problems may be solved. The creation of a feeling of environment is the way for us to show our appreciation of students. This is how I see it (INI)

The quotations illustrated the participants' beliefs that humans exist in a symbiotic relationship with community. People are dependent on each other and desire mutual trust and collaboration. As "enablers of a community environment" the participants wished that those whom they served were supported in order for their organization to develop a framework of shared values and meaningful communication. Positive leadership experiences were framed around collective and interactive efforts to build interpersonal relationships in the community in which the leadership process was taking place.

Committed to the "Well- Being" of Others: The Power of Relationships

Simone espoused a fundamentally different idea of how the organization that she represented viewed students in comparison to the undergraduate student organization in the

university. In Simone's opinion, the undergraduate student organization seemed more like a business that was geared towards making profit from student enrollment. However, in her opinion, her organization had a philosophy that expressed commitment to the well-being of the students. Simone declared that her organization did not believe in favour-trading, nor did they expect anything in return for advocating for their students. Their sole motivation was to respond to the students' needs.

[We] rely on students coming to us and needing us. So if we provide excellent services whether it is positive understanding or actually getting what it is that they ask us to do, they are going to tell someone else and then they are going to come to us with their problems and then we will kind of keep the ball rolling and getting these issues solved you know.... So we have to build good relationships. It is not like the undergraduate student [organization] that is almost very much run like a business. We are students, driven by the students' needs. Not driven by the amount of students which then transfers into fees. I did my undergrad for almost seven to eight years because I did it part-time and I never voted once [in that organization], because there was no personal relationship or anything. I don't even remember one thing that they tried to do... That is why it is so important that we treat students well. So for me, if I am to think of us as a business...the students are the bosses. We don't run solely on the profit of the student (FGI).

For Simone, relationships were formed by attending to students' needs and being intimately involved in their concerns. In Simone's perception the relationship between the undergraduate student organization and the undergraduate students was one that was divorced from any form of personal relationship or concern for students' needs. Simone's concept of the students as the bosses represented an inversion of the organizational pyramid which reflected a radical shift in

thinking about the concept of leadership. This upside down way of thinking revealed a basic psychological facet of the leadership relationship, that of putting those we serve first.

In emphasizing a distinction between undergraduate and graduate students, Melissa offered a different conceptualization of graduate students from that expressed by Simone. Melissa perceived graduate students as “employees” more so than students. This concept was in a sense, the flipside of Simone’s conceptualization. However, embedded in the notion of “employees” was the idea of a reciprocal relationship in which students and faculty work to achieve shared goals. Melissa viewed student leaders as responsible for the protection of that “union” by being responsive to the academic, as well as emotional well-being of the students within that “union.”

I think graduate students are more employees than they are students. Undergraduate students go to classes and that is sort of their big thing, but for us, classes are pretty minor. Most graduate students are involved in some kind of research. They are employees, they have supervisors that they work directly with so it is more of that union that we need to protect, to make sure that everything is fair and to make sure that they have everything they need to help them achieve their research goals (INI).

Once again, the leadership understandings that these students articulated emphasized the considerable emotional dimension that students associated with their most positive leadership experiences.

Paul expressed in his individual interview that a point of focus was building a relationship with students by attending to their needs. He stated,

If we could have an individual building on campus that is visible and in that structure to have a child care space, where graduate students come with their kids to reduce cost, I think that would be good for graduate students (FGI).

Henry, when asked how he built relationship with people did not hesitate to state that, “When dealing with people I prefer face to face or making a call. I don’t leave voice messages. I just call and call until I get you. I like casual kind of contact” (INI).

Henry used a personal story to illustrate how he builds relationships with people and the powerful impact that forming relationships had.

I am getting married so I had a reception here on Saturday for the people from the different countries who can’t come to [my home country]. And so because a lot of people would be coming they would normally charge for parking, I went to the Head of Consumer Services, and I had met him long ago and I kept contact with him. I even invited him to my wedding. So I asked him to waive the parking and he did (INI).

To drill down further I asked him to elaborate on what it was about his leadership that made him so accepted. He responded by saying,

I think it’s because I develop trust. Someone must trust you in a way that if you call and tell them you need a thousand dollars, they will write you a cheque for a thousand dollars.

I met this farmer a while back and I invited him to my wedding. He wrote me a cheque of 10, 000 dollars as a gift. I did not ask him for anything. So it’s because of the interaction.

So I think building relationships works. That is the only way you can impact (INI).

Intrigued by his ability to develop relationships, I probed further, asking him what was it that he did to build this trust. He replied,

I spend time with people. I interact with them. When I meet them I try to have a relationship. I don't just meet them and leave. Some are receptive, some are not. But for everybody that I meet I try to develop relationships. I don't have a problem" (INI).

I can personally offer credence to Henry's stories. When I sent the email approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board to invite Henry to participate in my research, he was the first to respond. He indicated in his response that he "would be pleased to be a part of my research and [was] very eager to meet [me]." When I finally met Henry face to face, he talked to me about my studies at the university and my plans for the future. He was interested in how I was coping, and he told me about his life and his wedding. Henry made communicating with him rather easy because he set that stage for interaction.

Henry elaborated further on the point that, through time and contact with people, one can make a positive impact.

You see the government does a lot of things but they don't impact you or whatever.

Unless they give you food or a cheque in your pocket then you won't see the difference.

Like the transit may be fine but if you are not using it, it doesn't affect you. If you live across the street and the roads across [the city] are good you do not know. So to me the relationships that are one on one are what make the difference (INI).

Henry further expressed that through deliberate efforts to interact with people he was able to identify and help students who really needed help but did not have the confidence or feel the comfort to discuss their problems.

So I come into the students' commons and when I come I try to greet people and tell them who I am and have conversations with them. So one day, I was conversing with a student and she just opened up and was crying. She was doing a Master's and I decided to

listen to her for the whole day, I didn't go anywhere. She was not feeding, she was just drinking tea. She owed rent. I think two months and it was affecting her. So, I sought out all the services to help her to pay her rent and to eat. I kept contact with her. She finished her Masters and got a big job. We are still in contact. Once I can help one student, I am happy. I know a lot of people and a lot of people know me that I don't know because students tell them about me (INI).

For Henry, building trust through time and contact was a way of creating a network of individuals in his leadership. This network of individuals was valuable because these individuals further aided him in carrying out his task of engaging and helping students.

The other student I helped is a student that came with her mother but she has a kid and then her mother is a widow. So they came to [the city] and she had gotten a place to stay in the residences. But then they told her we cannot have more than two of you in the building but there is a particular one for family. But she didn't have money to afford that. That would be 500 dollars more to pay, so I took her and her family to my basement. Then I took her to Consumer Services. The lady at Consumer Service is my friend. So I told them that this student is living in my basement and I don't like it, so I need you to get her a house. Within a week she called me and she said "Henry I got you something." So the ladies moved there and they are very appreciative. So the experience I have in my leadership is that you should make time to connect with people and help them in some way (INI).

From these participants' perspectives relationships were developed from time, contact, and genuine expressions of the desire to attend to other's needs. Their statements suggested that an

investment in relationships and the emotional well-being of others were fundamental to their leadership practices and their leadership beliefs.

“Being” Interdependent: I Can’t do this Alone

Another theme that emerged from the data that Henry considered as a positive experience in his leadership was taking advantage of interdependencies. Henry expressed that asking himself who his advisors were and calling on them for counsel proved beneficial in his leadership. Henry realized that he was not able to do things alone and as a result sought and valued the advice and guidance of others. He related that “normally, everything I do I consult my boss, like my supervisor. I tell him everything. I ask him for advice” (INI).

Melissa also reflected on her own leadership experience during her individual interview and stated that “it helps a lot when you are not working alone but you are working as a group” (INI). Similarly Paul related that “if you don’t have a standard workforce and people that will help you find the resource to help you when you make decisions it will be difficult to build consensus for different groups”(FGI).

Karen expressed the view that in the cases where the organization had extraordinary success, it was as a result of the active involvement and support of many people.

Interviewer: Can you tell me of a time when you saw leadership being demonstrated in an extraordinary way?

Karen: I think a big one was watching the ladies pull together for the grand gala we had last year. That was a big initiative, we didn’t really get it going until about three months before the event and so I honestly didn’t think that we would be able to pull it off. But we had two amazing ladies who were able to go in the community and find the best prices for the event and offer what was best to students and we ended up having close to 300 or

400 people attending. Those ladies really helped us out and really put a lot of time and effort into it (INI).

These comments illustrated the participants' understanding that more was achieved in leadership when individuals collaborated and recognized their dependence on each other. Connected to this view was the idea that leadership was a symbiotic relationship between the leader and his/her constituents. The route to high performance is embedded in fostering collaboration.

“Being” Zealous about Good Qualities: Appraising and Craving

Dominant in Paul's understandings of exceptional leadership and reflected throughout the other participants' interviews, was the idea of appraising individuals who they admired. The participants declared that they did not only appreciate other people's admirable characteristics, but also desired those characteristics within themselves. Paul noted that “as soon as I see people with good characteristics that I don't have I crave for it...I say to myself, I need this kind of demeanour” (INI). Paul also noted that he was encouraged by the positive feedback that he received from other individuals. He related that a critical incident that gave him the confidence to be in leadership roles had to do with people not only appraising his efforts but craving his qualities.

Way back before I came to the [university], I was a student leader in [another country] and you know you may have some convictions about governance and about student leadership. You may not be so sure if these views are popular, but you express it in the midst of other students and see so much positive reactions. People say “Wow that was great, I would love to be able to do that.” So I realised that people liked what I was doing. Getting that solidarity so to speak was good (INI).

Paul also commented that he felt that his leadership style was “effective” and working because people adopted his convictions as their convictions.

Some of the [issues] I can’t be specific about because of confidentiality. But the issues range from tuition increase, academic prioritization, to all kinds of issues. When I share my decision with the executive, I frequently get their approval. The experience gave me the impetus to continuously provide leadership when needed. You are assured to know that whatever convictions you have, people are buying it and adopting it as their convictions. It makes you get that feedback that your leadership style is effective and working. But I don’t’ like to say these things in public, I am so excited when I see my executives take my idea as the [organization’s] idea. That is what it is supposed to be right? (INI)

He noted that experiencing positive feedback, getting approval, and having people adopting his ideas were indicators of the effectiveness of his leadership. He also related that he did not feel any need to own the idea because once it was accepted by his executives, he viewed it as the organization’s idea.

In the focus group interview, Simone also shared the idea of appraising and craving qualities. In talking about Henry, Simone commented, “[I]do notice that every time Henry comes into the Commons he goes around and shakes someone’s hand and that is fantastic. I will try to copy you Henry.” Additionally, Simone expressed that Paul always “provide [s]an alternative. That is one of his key messages.” Simone did not only appraise the qualities that she admired in Paul and Henry but consciously sought to develop them.

Henry related that he viewed Simone “as a hub of ideas” as a “positive thinker” and that “normally if you get people that do not think a lot, then you won’t move forward” (FGI). Henry also said that he was inspired by his supervisor and sought to be like him.

I respect my boss, he is the coolest person I know. He never gets angry. He is very polite. He came from a very humble background and has come all this way. I totally respect him. Some people I know and respected, I don’t respect them anymore. They don’t stand for what you think they stand for. But my boss, I admire him a lot. He is the one that inspires me (INI).

Henry saw Paul as a visionary for the organization. He stated,

If it weren’t for his vision and his way of leadership then I don’t think we would be whatever we are. I have been through three presidents and out of all of them I think he is the greatest. He gives us the opportunity to do things as we want. If you are doing stuff that is wrong, he nudges you and if you don’t know what you are doing then he tries to help you and tell you that you can do it this way. And that is what you want in a leader (FGI).

The concept of empowerment was reflected in the above excerpt on Paul’s leadership practices and relationship with his colleagues. Henry stated “He gives us the opportunity to do what we want.” Suggested in this statement was the idea that Paul empowered his colleagues by sharing the power to make influential decisions in the organization. Shared power in an organization signifies that more people than the positional leaders have the information and possess the power to make decisions and enact changes. Evident in these comments was a conscious and purposeful affirmation of each other’s qualities and an expressed desire to cultivate those qualities. The

habit of appraising and recognizing individuals' strengths proved to be empowering to the participants as it helped them to recognize their own resources and potential for leadership.

Summary

The category of leadership as “being” revealed themes that demonstrated that leadership was considered positive when it was emotional, relational, inclusive, and collaborative. In both individual and focus group interviews the participants shared stories, beliefs, desires and convictions where emotional investment and service were priorities and thus had an impact on how they have grown to understand and practice leadership.

Leadership as “Learning”

The information gleaned from the data for the first research question suggested that the participants viewed their leadership experiences as positive and effective when they were constantly searching for better outcomes; trying to understand the perspectives; thoughts and behaviours of others; and engaging in a reflective process to improve their leadership. I conceptualize these practices as those of individuals who are engaged in a learning process or on a learning journey in their leadership. Learning is a process of acquiring new knowledge, as well as reinforcing existing knowledge. Both of these result in a change in behaviour. The participants' stories reflected fundamentally new ways of acting and thinking and reinforced existing leadership behaviours. I, therefore, classified this category as leadership as “learning.” The dominant themes that emerged in the leadership as “learning” category were appreciating perspectives, focussing on the big picture, and engaging in reflection.

Appreciating Perspectives: Valuing Differences

In the focus group interview session, Paul said that throughout his experiences, he learned that a factor that contributed to effective leadership was being able to understand the

varying perspectives of others. As a result of those experiences, he constantly provided space for different opinions.

In my leadership experience I learned the importance of getting diverse opinions and understanding that people in society have different views on respective issues. With a little bit of human psychology understanding one is able to comprehend that regardless of how good certain initiatives are, regardless of how beneficial they are for the common good, there are always different views, different perspectives. So giving different groups the opportunity to express their views and understanding those in the process was a very important factor for me that I learnt last year.

He further related that in order to provide good leadership, one has to be able to “find the right channel to listen to different views.”

I would say culture, rather than race, age not so much is where I experience differences in perspective. But I know that there are a lot of differences because of people’s cultural background. We were all born in different parts of the world, regardless of the race, so what may be normal for me may be very strange or different for you. And sometimes culture makes you have a different disposition to initiatives and there are people who because of their background may distrust a system. Maybe the system was not working so well because of their experiences. So regardless of a good initiative, people will always be cautious. But in setting an initiative you are trying to introduce, it is important to get different perspectives. Getting different perspectives helps in governance. It may take some time, but you as a student leader will have to provide the leadership that is [fair]. It is a decision that we will have to make at the end of the day. We have to find the right channel to listen to the different views (FGI).

Henry inserted that “I try to understand that there are divergent views. People may have diverse opinions but learning to compromise is key. That shows leadership and maturity” (FGI). He likened having different perspectives to his “five fingers that are all not the same” but that “are functioning within one entity” (FGI).

Paul and his colleagues developed an enhanced learning capability: valuing differences. Though conflicting views may pose dilemmas, they believed in engaging in collaborative inquiry would enhance and promote perceptions of fairness and equity. They became more sensitive and understanding with respect to different perspectives; they were also willing to find new communication processes to demonstrate that sensitivity and understanding.

Simone communicated another dimension of valuing differences. Her excerpt from the focus group interview represented the view that an important factor for leaders within organizations was understanding the idiosyncrasies of other people directly involved in the decision making process.

The most important thing in this leadership role is to understand who our co-executive members are, why they say some of the things that they say, and how their personalities work. So when they disagree with whatever I say I understand that they might not actually be in disagreement, but it might be just the way they say it or the way their personality goes. So I think that in order to really listen and communicate with someone, you kind of need to know their personality and how they do things (FGI).

Simone’s statement suggested that the leader’s challenge is to learn the patterns of communication with each person and to understand the issues that may affect their participation, interaction, and opinions. Simone further shared her evolutionary experience of understanding and valuing differences.

I have come to understand that the different opinions come from diversity and that has to be a strength, not a weakness of any argument. And then moving forward from that I have come to realize that some things are black and some are white but we can't stay there. We have to make grey to come to a decision. But at the same time, not everyone is going to be happy because they are just different and you have to understand that that is the way things might be...But we have to compromise or something and I think having a unified voice is really important (FGI).

It was important to note that Simone firmly believed in understanding perspectives and listening to varying opinions. However, her fundamental belief was that those varying perspectives and fundamental differences must never be obvious to the public. She referred to the decision-making process as “making grey.” “Making grey” could be interpreted as finding a balance, sifting through the conflicts, and coming to an understanding of the salient issues that need to be addressed. Grey is a mixture of black and white which cannot be separated after the merging process. It is the “grey” that must be projected to the public as that is what will keep the organization strong and its leadership credible. Behind closed doors, around the decision making table divergent opinions must take form; they must become “grey” in order for the organization to succeed.

Appreciating Perspectives: Anchoring to Values and Vision

Paul expressed in his individual interview that anchoring decision-making within the parameters of the policies and procedures of the organization was one way of ensuring transparency in his leadership. He further noted in the focus group session that the mission which the organization espoused should be the bedrock of all decision-making. According to him, when his team stayed true to the mission of the organization and functioned within the policies and

procedures, they received respect from their constituents, even when their decisions were unpopular.

Always understand policies and procedures, what governs us, what binds us. There are so many policies and procedures but it depends on what you have adopted as an organization. So for instance, you say [that the] policies and constitutions are the binding force, if you work within that framework, even if they oppose you they will know that you are working within that framework. They will respect your decision. I have seen that a lot in the [organization]. But when they know that you are breaking the laws, you are breaking the rules and the inquisition, you will have anarchy. You will have some kind of anarchy in the system. So one of the qualities I would suggest for any leader is to understand policies and procedures of the organization you are working for and ensure, regardless of how sometimes it is difficult to follow it, make sure you follow it to the best of your ability (FGI).

Paul's comments suggested that a major challenge will be to effectively lead and manage relationships within the organization's mission or purpose. A related challenge will be to effectively use the organization's mission and purpose as a guideline to define the norms and values that make up the culture. In this way, though people disagree with the leader's decision, they will understand and appreciate the reasons why decisions were made. Members of the interpretation panel surmised that Paul's use of the word "anarchy" may be interpreted as 'distrust.' Essentially, operating outside of the established culture of the organization will create distrust among the members of the organization. Another interesting aspect of the above comment was that leaders have to first possess intimate knowledge of the way the organization

operates in order to effectively manage it. Lack of such knowledge may result in breaches that may become detrimental to leadership.

Simone expressed a similar sentiment about the importance of following policies and procedures when dealing with dissenting opinions. However, she also related that this may not be prudent in all cases.

I agree with what he says about understanding policies and procedures. But you really have to come to that with no agenda. You are public servant for the people. Following the rules and regulations that have been handed down is important. But, if there is a policy that doesn't fit anymore with the changing demographic or time then I think as a part of your responsibility you should also note that and try to change that. But you cannot simultaneously change it and try to put through the policy at the same time (FGI).

I interpret Simone's comment to mean that leaders will also have to adapt to the changing roles and relationships of different segments of society. It may be suggested by Simone, that a critical factor of leadership is the ability to re-examine the mission of the organization in light of the changing and complex demands. Additionally, it is clear that people are the key factor in organizational effectiveness. Therefore being transparent as a leader is important.

"You really have to come to that with no agenda" suggests that the model of the traditionally "all-powerful leader" who had the power to shape their organizations in ways that supported their personal values, assumptions and styles was no longer acceptable. Rather, the leader as a "public servant of the people" will need to operate based on the people's demands.

Appreciating Perspectives: Seeking Common Understanding, not Consensus

Another aspect of appreciating perspective that I extracted from the data was the importance of seeking common understanding, rather than consensus, when there were

dissenting opinions. Paul related that “the important thing is not that everyone agrees, but that they understand the policies that govern the decisions” (FGI). Steve added that “it doesn’t mean by listening that you are in agreement but that you are making an effort to understand what students are saying” (FGI).

Suggested in these comments was the idea that these leaders built deep common understanding around the purpose, goals and direction that they planned to take. They understood that disagreements were integral to creative conflict and they tried to communicate the feeling around their members that disagreements were to be fully understood by everyone.

Appreciating Perspectives: On Becoming a Listening Leader

A further aspect of appreciating perspective was listening. Paul related the following perspective.

The other thing I would add to it is listening. I have seen what it has done. It has a lot of magic. The first time I understood the power of listening is when I met the president. That is one of her skills. She listens a lot. I saw value in doing that. When people know that you listen before decisions are made and that they are given the opportunity to say what their views are, they feel valued. When you actually listen you get the best from those views and you [get] others to respect the outcome of any process. I think a good leader should be able to listen. By listening I don’t mean being quiet. Being quiet is an aspect of listening. So you can be quiet and be talking in your mind. It took me a while to learn (FGI).

Paul’s comments underscored the fact that the listening leader adds value to people. Being intimately engaged in conversations with others, considering their insights, and expressing a need for expansion and clarification of their thoughts will allow people to feel that they are

valuable assets in the organization. Paul's statement, "When you actually listen," means that when you give full attention to not only the words, but also to the person's behaviour, mood or tone, you may be able to hear the message behind the perceived behaviour of the individual.

This point of listening was further enhanced by Paul's comment that "the value of listening is to get the talking points and then structure that in your own way" (FGI). Essentially, Paul may be suggesting that it is through respecting and valuing another's opinion that one gets a conversation to flow. Another interpretation may be that paying attention to others will sharpen the leader's focus and allow him/her to accomplish more.

In the focus group interview Paul elaborated how much he valued the act of listening and how transformative it was in his leadership journey. During a discussion about how students from different cultures were "fundamentally opposed to [the] democratic process of getting a referendum" for a system they were trying to implement, Paul explained that he utilized the strategy of listening to effectively communicate why the organization decided to advocate for such a system.

For me the first thing I ensured [was] that people [were] listened to. You will learn to understand that every view is valuable regardless of how different they are from you as a leader. I give them the opportunity to express that view and then I sit in silence, try to explain what they are saying back to them, and make that decision and then be honest about it (FGI).

Paul expressed that the listening skill did not come naturally to him but that it was something he observed in his own supervisor while studying at the university.

I identify that my limitation is listening. I love to talk and I talk so fast when am excited. I am developing the ability to now practice and not to block out people. That has a lot to

do with [my superior]. I observe [her]. She articulates it in big structures and tells you what you say. Then she asks if you agree. If you don't, she starts again. I was amazed at how she does it. I said wow, I said that. So I realize that when I was talking and talking I was not listening to myself. So, that is something that I hope to develop so well (FGI).

Interestingly, Paul's colleagues believed that he has already mastered the art of listening. In the focus group interview, the participants were asked to comment on aspects of each other's leadership that they admired. Henry's appraisal of Paul is reflected in the quotation below.

I think I like the way Paul is straightforward. He listens. He may have his views but he does not judge. When you come with your opinion, he listens and he thinks about it. He does not listen and then forget about it. He tells you that it is a very important view but he finds a way of accommodating so that you don't feel left out (FGI).

Simone expressed a similar conviction.

He listens, he appreciates. I can kind of start to tell when he disagrees with something because he goes like "you know, yes that is important but..." He acknowledges that whatever idea you have is wonderful and if he doesn't have anything to add then he will provide alternatives and that is one of his key messages (FGI).

Through observation, listening and the deliberate attempt to understand other people's perspectives, Paul was developing as a listening leader. He referred to his inability to listen as a "limitation," one that he has arduously tried to improve. Paul recognized that there was far more to be gained by suppressing the desire to talk than by dominating a conversation. Interestingly, that which he perceived as a "limitation" was deemed as a strength to those observing. It may be that Paul did not notice that he was overcoming his deficiency because he continued to set higher

goals for himself. It may also be that his understanding of the extent of his deficiencies was different from that of his peers.

Thinking in the Big Picture: “Focus on the Toast”

Emerging from stories of past and current leadership experiences as well as observation of other leadership practices Simone said that thinking in “big pictures” was critical to leadership. She used the metaphorical expression of a “toast of bread” to describe the big picture and the “bread crumbs” as the small details.

I would like to think I am a good leader. I think about big pictures and sometimes when you are detailed oriented its good but you lose focus of what the major thing is and that again is something Paul was good at. He said that we are not talking about details; we are talking about big pictures and even when you are in an argument whether it’s about something in leadership or even at home or with your supervisor or whomever.

Sometimes, especially in relationships too you lose yourself in the small details. My boyfriend calls it the bread crumbs of the relationship. Leadership is about the toast; the breadcrumbs are the small details (INI).

Simone embraced a “wholeness” worldview. Without a clear understanding of the “big picture” of an organization, leaders tend to oversimplify complex organizational problems and employ solutions only to the behaviours and events associated with problems rather than focus on the systems and structures that may have caused the problems. For Simone, leadership is the ability to glean strategic insights and to ensure that the vision of the organization is the point of focus and the area in which most of one’s energy is expended.

In her leadership practices, she used this “wholeness” philosophy as a reflective tool to improve her skills as a leader. She further explained by saying, “I always think about my

experiences and think about how I can improve and also about the wider side of things” (FGI). In another story about some volunteer work she did at a radio station, she explained how her parents vehemently opposed her working so many hours without monetary compensation. She related that she was looking “at the bigger picture.” Not getting paid was a small detail for her. Her satisfaction, as she related it, was playing music that was “in a sense preserving uniqueness within this broader realm of unity” (INI).

Simone also alluded to the difficulties that people may face when leaders do not focus on the big picture. She further expressed that the “little things,” when they became the point of focus, did not always result in the improvement of all involved.

I think a lot of the problems that we have today may be like in Canada or even internationally is that leaders don’t have any vision of the future. If they were focussed on the big picture then maybe we wouldn’t have such predicaments. Like very crudely, there is a lot of floods in Alberta right now. Don’t they think? Maybe the Tarsands aren’t such a good idea. This pipeline that they wanna build that is going to cut a continent in half. You know, so I kind of think that goes back to our politicians and leaders. They focus on those little things that will get them in office right now and what’s gonna make the people happy right now. That does not always work out in the end you see. But what about the future, their future, humanity’s future? (INI)

From Simone’s observation, the inability of leaders to see things in a broader context or to rise above the details may create problems that affect not only organizations but humanity as a whole.

Engaging in Reflection: Allowing the Spirit Man to Grow

When asked about the practices they employed to develop their leadership, the participants alluded to engaging in regular reflections. Paul said,

I meditate a lot, but not the kind of meditation that some people do here. We have all kinds of meditation right. I believe in the tri-part nature of man. I believe that there is a spirited part and there is a body. So if you understand that you are actually a spirit person, to be able to be handling physical work better I spend time in quietness, you know, where I am not being disturbed and look at what I did in the day and see how much respect I give to my fellow man and how much they have issues with me, and then see how much I can improve (FGI).

Similarly, Henry's response indicated that reflection was a method that he used to assess himself as a leader.

Yes, I have some quiet moments here. I am a Christian. I do that when I am reading the Bible. I turn to that every day. That helps me look back at the happenings. Like if I really did anything that negatively affected anyone and then try to do better. I also reflect a lot on my activities throughout the day when I am doing the dishes. Yes, it helps me to grow (FGI).

The participants' comments suggested that reflection is a purposeful introspection that provides insights into their most intimate thoughts. In essence, it is an introspection of the soul. Engaging in this state of being allowed them to purposefully examine and discard practices or activities that detracted from central goals or impeded progress. Reflection also allowed them to affirm those practices that were consistent with their values as well as those that were beneficial to others in society.

Summary

The leadership as “learning” category reflected the emergence and evolution of leadership strategies that the student leaders perceived as most positive in their leadership experiences. The participants understand that in leadership they will inevitably grapple with conflicting and dissenting voices as interest are negotiated. However, their responses also indicated that appreciating differences, focussing on the big picture, and reflecting on their leadership practices were essential to their learning as leaders.

Leadership as “Doing”

The final category that emerged from the data in the response to the first question suggested that the student leaders perceived leadership as positive and rewarding when there was an outward manifestation of results. In this context, leadership was seen as “action-oriented,” focussed on getting the work done while refining and enhancing leadership practices and behaviours.

Providing the Evidence: Leaders Make Things Happen

Henry believed in early victories. He believed that leaders make things happen. He said that “no matter how good your intentions are at the end of the day people want to see results. They want evidence that you are working. We have a responsibility to provide that” (FGI).

Paul added that in order to “get students engaged, we are now finding ways to let students know that we are working for them.”

We want to show students that we are impacting them. So like when we took up the decision to campaign to increase graduate student funding and we have done well with that the PhD students’ [stipends] were reviewed and increased. That is going to benefit our graduate students and we ensured that students know that we advocated for that. So

there have been other initiatives that students are benefitting from and as a result of our efforts will be able to save money. We are having a big conference next year that will benefit all spectrums of people. Those that love academic activity will get to do things that are academic based and those that love social will get the opportunity to partake in that (FGI).

These examples illustrated Henry and Paul's understandings that getting results were vital functions of leadership. They believed that positive leadership was turning their bold objectives into reality. For them, showing visible signs that changes were taking place was crucial in maintaining and developing the people's confidence that their organization could provide quality representation.

Paul and Henry referred to their sense of urgency and preparation when queried about what they thought they did well as leaders. In the following excerpt, Henry identified setting targets as a means of achieving positive results in his leadership.

For me normally I like having targets. Like let's say I have ten things that I need to do but I identify the five most urgent that I am gonna do and the ones that will impact a lot of people. Then I go after them and they are normally done. So other than stopping to do something that a student may come to me saying that I have this problem or that, I am normally a focussed and a targeted person (INI).

Henry demonstrated a proactive spirit. He did not hesitate to assist students.

When students come to me with pressing problems I like to go straight. Sometimes it depends on the situation like if I can talk to someone junior and they can do something. But otherwise I just go straight I know that urgently something must be done. There have been sensitive issues where I had to go straight to the [top]. My boss always told me if

you have issues go talk to the highest power but don't go every day. Make sure they don't get used to you. So sometimes you have to do that to get things done (INI).

Henry further expressed his sense of urgency for getting things done.

I am like this. If we are supposed to fix a time to meet I will not say I will think about it. I hate that. If I can't make it, I tell you I can't make it. If I am late I will tell you that I am late. If there is something that I can do about I will. For me, that is important (INI).

Paul contributed his view of what he thought he did well as a leader.

“[T]o be successful as a student leader you have to give it enough time, you have to give it enough sacrifice, and enough preparation. I see the secret to every successful participation as preparation. To have enough time for something that will last an hour I go home and spend at least four hours just prepping for it”(INI).

The participants' narration of the urgency of their actions suggested that leadership was about producing results and being responsive to the demands at hand.

Choosing Battles Wisely: The Art of Prioritizing

Another facet of leadership as “doing” that emerged was the importance of choosing battles carefully. Henry expressed that in leadership one has to “prioritize and try to choose the battles that you want to fight” (FGI). He emphasized the fact that “not all battles are worth it so don't fight battles that are not rewarding” (FGI). Henry elaborated on this further, stating, “Before you start a battle, you should gauge whether you will be able to reach the end. If you can't reach the end, there is no need to even start.” Henry also noted each battle “has its own significance” but “we can't address them all, so we have to look at what it means for most students and we also look at the possibility of getting it done” (FGI). Henry gave an example of

how the organization chose the issues to address amidst all the undesirable situations with which the executive was confronted.

We are now campaigning for the creation of an Ombudsman position, a person that deals with advocacy for students and a place where services can be provided for the office. It took us three years to make that decision but we made that decision this year because we know that we have the time and resources to fight that battle. Hopefully, the next executive will look for more issues to pick. Now some students wanted us to fight against the workforce planning. They were not happy because some staff members were being relieved of their jobs. Now that is sad, and as sad as it is, it is not a priority right now for our students. Also, we see if it's in tandem with the vision and culture of the organization (FGI).

Henry believed that it was far more effective to win a battle that was directly related to the students' needs. Though they thought fighting for staff retention had its own merit, they assessed their priorities, examined their mission and purpose and made their conclusions based on those.

Engaging and Connecting: “Cross-Pollinate” Ideas

The data that formed the theme “engaging and connecting” suggested that leadership happened when the participants were engaging, connecting, and reconnecting with the student members within their organization. For Paul, his perception of a valuable leadership experience was being able to “cross-pollinate” ideas with those whom he served. Planning events for students to attend was a method he used to engage the students within the organization. He related,

When I saw the excitement on the faces of the student members, it convinced me that we were engaging our members. I felt that we were effective in our leadership style for them

to attend our grand gala and that for me was my most outstanding time in the past year (INI).

Paul perceived students' attendance at the events planned by his association as an indicator that they were doing something good in their leadership. His conviction did not only come from their attendance but also from their outward behaviour, "the excitement on their faces." From this reaction, Paul was able to confirm that he and the other members of the executive were doing something right. Paul expanded on his convictions that his student organization was succeeding at engaging students. When asked to speak about the areas in which they excelled as an organization, he responded:

We excel in organizing events for our members. Most people like to socialize with their colleagues. We are able to organize events that bring most people to a particular location, let's say the orientation. Last year we had about 1,800 people at our orientation, lots of opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. If people have that opportunity, I would say we are excelling. So in some ways I could say we excel, having provided all the enabling environment to our members (INI).

In the focus group interview, Paul further communicated, "We have to make sure that any one student who comes to us feels a part of our system. We have to impact them in some way." When asked what more he would want to be doing in his leadership, he said doing more of what he thinks they already do best, "engagement."

I would also find more innovative ways to be more engaging, to ensure that students participate more actively than they do now. I would be excited if 500 people show up for our meetings. That is a lot of people right? Or in [an] election if we could have about 95 percent turn-out. That can be possible if people are well motivated. Finally, one way to

ensure that there is fairness in the whole process of decision-making on campus is when there is active student representation and participation (INI).

Paul's conviction that engagement was a positive indicator of good leadership was also echoed by Karen in her individual interview. Karen related,

I think that the best way the executives can show their appreciation is by engaging students. I would love to see social events through which we can meet more people and show that we are welcoming and that we are there to represent them. We are there to give them a hand, if that is what they need (INI).

Karen added that doing things that work and that people are interested in was positive for her as a student leader.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about a time that you would say this is your most positive leadership experience?

Karen: I think just when things go smoothly, [at my previous university], I came upon a group that was at the point of ending because we didn't have a large membership and being able to build that up and finding people that were as passionate as I am about rebuilding the group and finding a niche for students in Biology at the time, that was a big thing. And having organized events where you see people turn out and people are starting to know who we are, so that was our goal and we achieved it and I think that is always a positive thing and that goes for [our organization] as well. When we host events and we see a large turnout you start to get that feeling that students are getting interested to know who you are. I think it is a motivation for doing more. When you are doing something and other people don't recognize it or people aren't participating well you go, oh I guess I am doing something wrong. But when you are having a successful event or

something that people are interested in it kind of prompts you to do more. So I start to ask people, “What else do you want from me, what else do you want to see from us?” (INI).

Having heard all these comments, I began to see the authenticity in their leadership as I, a graduate student, was a recipient of their engaging efforts. In their perceptions, leadership was positive because they were initiating and cultivating relationships. For them, leadership was about the continuous, ongoing process of building relationships, identifying goals, and improving situations.

Seeing is Believing: Making Oneself Visible and Accessible

Henry related that making time for people and being accessible was a purposeful practice in his leadership.

There was a survey done through our website and one of the questions was “Do you know your executives?” A lot of people said no. For me, my way of correcting that is being very visible and accessible to students. When I greet students, I try to identify myself, who I am. When I work out at the gym I greet them. I strike up conversations. In the cafeteria, wherever. So a key thing is visibility. The other thing with how I impact students is that I make it a part of my duty to sell this organization. I really give it a lot of importance (FGI).

Paul substantiated Henry’s comments on the organization’s efforts of being visible and accessible to students. He related that the “visibility of the organization has increased” and presently they sit on “every committee.” Simone commented as well on the importance of accessibility saying that,

The more accessible we become, the more we can engage students. So we are thinking about getting a food business and a conference room so that graduate students can come

here more often to use these services. We are also trying to improve our presence on like websites (FGI).

The participants espoused the view that leadership was more impactful when leaders move out of their offices and spend time with their constituents.

Summary

The leadership as “doing” category reflected the conscious efforts of the participants to ensure that there were positive tangible outcomes for the student members in their organization. They understand that leadership was more than forming relationships, but also ensuring that individuals’ needs were met with urgency, goals prioritized, and their presence, as leaders felt among the student members of their organization.

The Outlier: A “Quasi – Hierarchical” Perspective of Leadership

Interestingly, though participants continuously demonstrated a relational and inclusive view of leadership, and though they viewed the organization’s executives as a “group of equal partners,” they still expressed the importance of a “central comment” or head leadership figure in decision-making. The following excerpts reflected Henry’s views.

We all have different views. Normally we discuss or bring in our opinion but then we discuss it with the president and he would have the ultimate authority to say this is how we are going to do it and then it should be fine. Normally, having that central comment brings some sort of cohesion to the process...so the first thing is that central comments, if there is a central comment, things tend to work (FGI).

I prodded Henry to find out if he believed that a hierarchical form of leadership worked better than having a web-like structure. Henry responded,

Yes, because there are some decisions that need to be made and everybody has something to say or have their opinion and unless there is someone who is there to stamp their authority on it and say this is what we are going to do then nothing changes. If there is no leader there to do that then we won't know where we are going, we will be like headless chickens (FGI).

Simone stated her views on why it was necessary to have one person as the signature of authority in decision making.

In our organization, it is good to have someone at the head because then he is speaking...like he lets all of us make the decision and whatever we decide we go for it but we need that leader to say "Is this what we are taking on or not. You guys need to make that decision so that is the decision we use to move forward and not deviate." So if there are people taking different positions, we are never going to get anything done. So that is kind of why I think it is important to have a leader. We are fundamental to his position and his position is fundamental to us (FGI).

Though the "head leader" of the organization empowered the executive members, by enabling them to make decisions, and to express their perspectives, his authority as the lead figure was very important to them. The executive members expressed their need for the head leader's direct intervention or his "stamp of authority." This desire for the head leader's stamp of authority may signify the head leader's ability to refocus the energy of his subordinates to accomplish the vision of the organization. Conversely, the desire for a central comment or stamp of authority may suggest that the subordinates may not be experiencing a complete liberation of their potential to make critical decisions in their organization. This may be further evidenced in

Henry's equation of the lack of a designated leader in the decision making process to individuals running about as "headless chickens."

Summary of Participants' Perceptions of Leadership

In this section I presented the participants' understandings of their most positive and rewarding leadership experience by placing the data that emerged in three broad categories; leadership as "being," leadership as "learning," and leadership as "doing." These categories were further broken down into themes. A brief summary of the response to the first research question indicated that the participants saw themselves at their best when they were humane, collaborative, and productive. During the discussions, an anomalous perspective emerged which I categorised as leadership as "quasi-hierarchical." This theme suggested that the participants' perspectives of leadership may represent some elements of a hierarchy but not possessing all the features as discussed about hierarchical models in Chapter Two.

Part Two: Participants' Conceptualization of Leadership Development

This section presents the participants' conceptualizations of leadership development. Two categories emerged from the data regarding the student leaders' conceptualization of leadership development. The categories were self-development and institutional initiatives. These categories were further broken down into themes.

Self-Development

The data suggested that leadership development was not done to an individual or for an individual; rather, the individual needed to negotiate some critical issues which concern the "self" in order to mature as a leader. The subcategories that support this conceptualization were finding one's passion, managing emotions, taking initiatives, and harnessing one's values. Figure 4.2 illustrates the various component of this category.

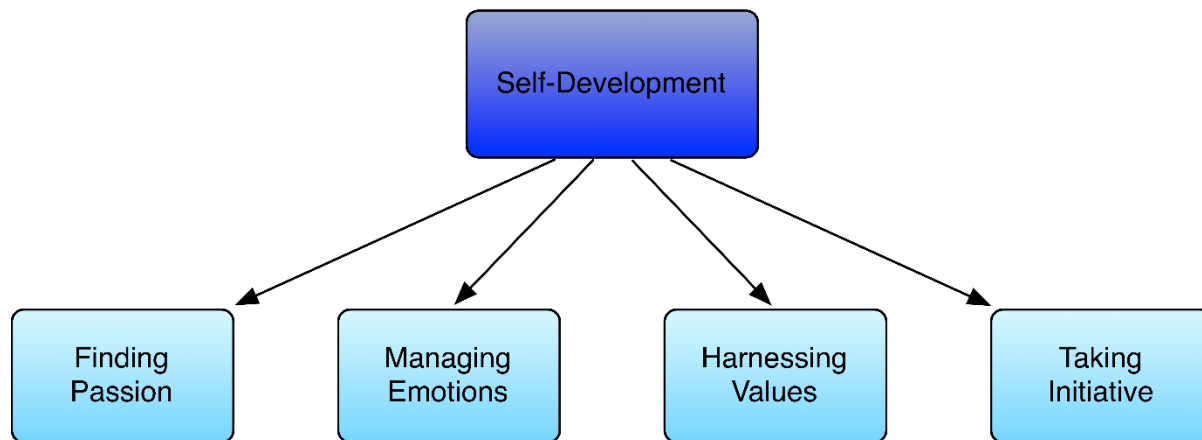


Figure 4.2: The components of leadership development as self-development

Finding Passion

Evident in the participants' view of leadership development was the notion of understanding self. Importantly, the data suggested that the concept of "self" surpassed race, ethnicity, education, sexual orientation or affiliations, rather the concept of "self" was enveloped in the notion of passions, abilities, and emotions. Karen related that "understanding your passion" is the "key ingredient to develop as a leader." From Karen's perspective leadership development was a personal initiative which one has to "be passionate and persistent about" (INI). She indicated that before you can say that you are a leader you "have to know what it is that you are protecting" (INI). Karen further emphasized the importance of finding a passion in developing as a leader.

You have to dig deep down and realise your passion and then pursue leadership in those. So often times, I mean who do we call a mature person? Someone who has understood his or her passions and views of life. You cannot be a leader until you understand yourself. It is not enough to be loud and persuasive. You need to have essence and essence comes from within. And if it doesn't come from within, it's not essence, it is not

strong enough. It is not good enough. It is not going to pass the test of time. You need to discover it. Possibly, you may not be aware at the beginning....but you need to do some soul searching. See who you are. Find out what you are passionate about and then go and become a leader in that area (INI).

Interestingly, Karen may be suggesting that pursuing “passion” is not necessarily something that comes easily, neither is passion readily identified within individuals. Instead, it is something that one has to “dig deep” to find or engage in “soul searching” to unearth. For Karen, finding and living that passion was what defined individuals as leaders. This defining feature she referred to as “essence.”

Paul added that in order for one to develop as a leader one has to possess “passion” and “interest,” otherwise leadership will become a “chore.”

But talking about [becoming] a leader, it must be mixed with passion, it must be mixed with interest. So if individuals are not interested in pursuing a particular leadership path it becomes a chore, a task and once it is task you may not get the best from that individual (INI).

For Paul leadership was about having that intrinsic motivation to contribute to an organization or a cause. Possessing passion and interest as a leader suggest a deep sense of personal involvement. A leader without passion and interest may become inert and sluggish in his or her role.

Managing Emotions

Simone suggested that one aspect of leadership development was about managing emotions. For Simone, managing emotions has to do with knowing when to express anger and opposition when dealing with other individuals. Simone related a personal experience that she

had in her leadership experience, that had she known how to manage emotions, could have been avoided. She stated, “At the retreat, in a meeting we had, I was talking out of turn, and stepping out of line” and “I was reprimanded” (FGI). She later stated that an important criterion in leadership is the ability to “understand how to challenge someone’s idea, without really challenging the person” and “knowing how to be diplomatic when telling someone that you do not agree with them.” She cited some influencers in her life that she believed possessed that ability and highlighted situations where lack of such capability caused chaos.

You know, like a lot of times in politics, leaders fight each other. Like have you heard clips of our parliament house, where people bang on table and yell at each other. It’s like they need to go back to kindergarten and learn the basics. Like you can only speak when you are holding this (*holding a paper in her hand*) or something like that. And when I look at Elisabeth May, she calls out the government for being unfair and she does so diplomatically... I think you need to have a level of maturity. I mean you can’t go to meetings and have your face like this (*making an annoyed face*). Even though you might not agree with somebody, you need to be diplomatic and know when to say things (INI).

Implicit in Simone’s statement is the need for leaders to possess the skill of social perceptiveness. That is the ability to understand when to pull back, move forward, present dissenting opinions, or remain steadfast in stating one’s perspectives. Additionally, as was related in Simone’s example of Elisabeth May, integral to leadership development is the skill of being assertive with team members without undermining the various members of the team.

Harnessing Values

The participants spotlighted the notion of harnessing values as necessary to develop as a leader. Paul expressed that the Judeo-Christian background “gives me the material I need to

create my moral standard that then reflect in my leadership style” (INI). Paul further related that an understanding of one’s “personal morals and values influences leadership development and must serve as a kind of moral compass for an individual” (INI). He communicated the importance of values and morals in leadership development. In a spirited conversation on the issue he likened morals and values in leadership development to having internal standards in quantitative experiments.

Interviewer: So you believe that understanding your values and morals will help you develop as a leader?

Paul: Yes, because it gives you the ethical background. In my masters I did analytical science and there is no way you can do your quantitative experiments without having your internal standard. Your internal standard is what makes you look at how efficient your instruction is so we need that kind of standard in our day to day point of view. I am not a very strong religious person. I don’t so much practice anything religious in nature but I believe that you can harness the ethical standards in the scripture. I don’t know about other religious beliefs but what I understand is that if people sit down and follow what they were taught when they were younger and we translate such moral convictions into governance we will have a sane society (INI).

Interestingly, Paul declared that values are “subjective,” as a result, leadership development should not be limited to understanding values but also to harnessing those values so that they can be translated into good governance.

[F]or instance the Bible is our scriptures as Christians, so if the scripture say do not do that, it does not mean that it will necessarily translate in a leadership avenue. So you would say I will not do this because my Bible says so. That is a position of beliefs, but if

you are able to harness the foundations, you harness it in such a way that it can be translated into public policies that people will still accept and appreciate even when they don't believe what you believe. Then you would say that your moral standards have been well articulated and will result in the common good of everybody (INI).

Similarly, Simone when queried about how she developed as a leader related an experience that she had in high school, suggesting how values gave definition to her leadership.

I mean going back to high school I remember driving my friends to lunch. Someone littered outside of my car and I stopped the car and would not drive until she picked it up. She was like "I am going to tell the teacher why we are late" and I was like "please do." I do not know where I got that from but I guess I am just driven my morals...that is who I am (FGI).

From the participants perspectives understanding and harnessing values were important in their leadership development as their values guided their actions, behaviors and, decision making.

Taking Personal Initiative

Paul communicated that the desire for leadership development should come from the individual. He stated, "Those who think they are born leaders should ensure that they have that training. I think that a self-convinced leader should look for opportunities within the institution to train" (INI).

An individual may also take personal initiative for developing as a leader by observing how he or she is received by others and listening to and assessing how others respond to the leadership decisions he/she may take. Paul's narration of his personal story of leadership initiatives reflected this point of view.

This goes way back for me. [Back in my home country] I had some convictions about governance and student leadership. You may not be so sure if these views are popular but you express it in the midst of other students and see so much positive reactions. People say wow that was great and I began to see that people liked what I was saying. So getting that feedback from students was good. And if I can think of another story I had people making some individual decisions that was in my opinion unfavourable to students. I expressed it and got so much support from my students. Over 4000 people protested with me so things like that gave me the assurance that people will support me... and that solidarity so to speak was reassuring to me in my [leadership development] (INI).

Paul further referred to the importance of taking personal initiative in order to develop oneself as a leader.

As a leader, you may sit on so many committees and you want to be valuable to the committees. You go home and read and listen to what those great minds are saying. And with time you develop as a leader. This is pure Physics or even Psychology. It's called "Passive Contagion." In that, the people around you end up influencing you. So if you want to be a good leader, you hang around people who have mature minds. Before you know, passive contagion has taken place (FGI).

Both Henry and Simone supported Paul's perspective of "passive contagion" stating that they believe in the concept and the effects it has on an individual's development.

Another aspect of personal initiative was the notion of actively becoming involved in activities to develop as a leader. Melissa related her story of taking this kind of initiative.

[By] getting more involved in student groups and activities and things in late middle school and high school [I] ended up somewhere in the front. I started taking off [at my

previous university]. I got actively enrolled in outside organizations and clubs such as bands, campus performances, and then I became an executive, an advisory committee member for that [and so] on.Yeah, so that was when I discovered I had the temperament and that I was organized enough (INI).

Karen also highlighted taking personal initiative to develop oneself as a leader in her individual interview. She noted that student leaders should take the time to “understand their rights, their place, and the worth and value that they bring to the institution.” She further emphasized that “popularizing” those rights will show other individuals how important student leaders are.

From the participants’ perspective taking personal initiative in order to develop as a leader helped in the identification of leadership competencies, as well as allowed for affirmation of these competencies from other individuals.

Institutional Initiatives

The facilitation of leadership development was highlighted further through what I conceptualize as institutional initiatives. The data suggested that leadership development was to be the responsibility of the educational institution in which the student was enrolled. The institutional initiatives identified were: leadership courses, experiential learning, leadership opportunity, skill development and experiential learning. Figure 4.3 illustrates the various components of this category.

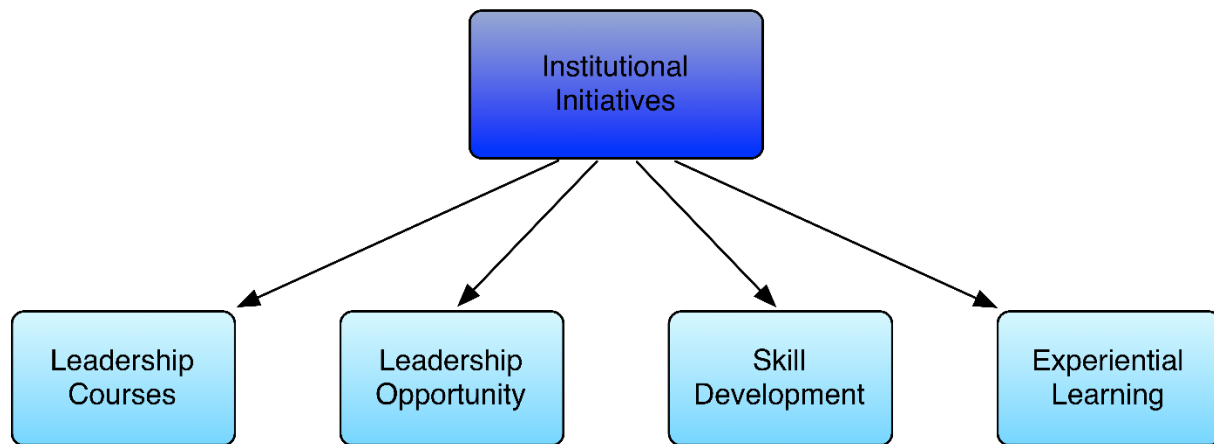


Figure 4.3: The components of leadership development as institutional initiatives

Leadership Courses

Some participants referred to the need for leadership courses in institutions to encourage individuals who are interested in developing as a leader. Paul stated,

The institution need to prioritize and add leadership development to its professional training. They need to identify and develop courses that would develop identified skills and gear those courses to leadership training. My view of a comprehensive student is one who has vast skills. Right now, there is only emphasis on academic productivity...and that is just producing students who are half-skilled in my opinion (INI).

Paul further emphasized that leadership courses geared towards leadership development should be “mandatory” and should begin at the undergraduate level.

In my undergrad we had business, introduction to business studies and it was mandatory for all students in my institution. Then, I didn’t see why but now I see that it was a good initiative. But it may not be useful at the graduate level because it’s specialized but at the undergraduate level there should be a mandatory introduction to leadership course. Just something basic where you can see the trends and if you are a self-identified leader you

would want to do further studies in leadership... but the institution should provide the opportunity for willing participants (INI).

Karen also identified the importance of leadership courses in leadership development. She stated that “it would be great if we could have courses where [facilitators] sit down and say yes, this is how you develop whether it is run by a professional or not” (INI).

Leadership Opportunity

Participants further highlighted the facilitation of leadership development through the concept of leadership opportunity. Henry noted that getting leadership opportunities in school facilitated his development as a leader. He expressed that “as a small kid like maybe in class One” he was given the “opportunity to be a class monitor.” He related that his duties included “looking out for who would break the rules,” “helping out teachers when they can’t make it at class,” “punishing kids who made noise” and “writing stuff on the board” (INI). According to Henry, these early opportunities made him “develop as a leader.”

Paul viewed creating leadership opportunities as a responsibility of the institution in which the individual is enrolled.

If as a self-identified leader I want to harness my leadership ability with a student association, I might find it difficult in this environment because there is no leadership training available. If I want to be a good teacher or lecturer or professor there is training. So it must be that overtime the institution was able to develop an avenue to identify those who are self-identified teachers or appointed teachers to take advantage of that opportunity. They should do the same for leadership development (INI).

Paul also mentioned mentoring as another opportunity to develop as a leader. Paul viewed mentoring as a “personal experience that unveils the potential of leader” while allowing for

making “mistakes in the process.” He stated that “mentoring would be important, maybe for a couple of months before the individual would be allowed to take the leap.” Mentoring, in Paul’s perception, was necessary for students to observe leaders at close range to propel them towards future growth.

The participants perceived retreats as an essential approach to leadership development and maturity. Karen mentioned that the retreats that her group planned for their organization were a rewarding experience. Likewise, Henry commented that during the retreat they “organize and strategize so that everyone can be fully aware of the goals and objectives [for the year]” (FGI).

Paul added that the “retreat is more a focus on what [was] done in the previous year and how it may be improved. I thought it was productive.” He also suggested that the retreat created a space for engaging in rigorous thought on complex issues and allowed for growth and maturity in their leadership.

We [had] to get to the outcomes and because so many ideas came up and the initiatives were discussed and agreed upon, if we were able to implement all we planned then that would be awesome for the [organization]. And I would think that it is difficult to have that kind of decision in an environment like this. You have to be on a retreat to be able to get through that process (FGI).

Skill Development

Participants mentioned prioritizing skills in leadership development. Melissa shared that leadership development should teach certain skills such as critical thinking skills, organizational skills, and interpersonal skills. She emphasized the importance of skills for performing effectively in leadership roles.

I believe that critical thinking skills, interpersonal skills, and the ability to process information that people are presenting you with, are very important for leadership. Certainly, organizational skills and technology-based organizational skills are essential, because obviously we are in the computer era. So being able to organize things with computer programs, I think that is personally important. But critical thinking skills are an essential component of that as well (INI).

Similarly, Karen noted that “public speaking skills, presentation skills, and writing skills are very important for a person to develop as a leader.” Simone cited “conflict resolution skills” and the “ability to think outside the box” (FGI) or what I referred to as divergent thinking skills as vital to leadership development.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning emerged from the data as another catalytic condition necessary for leadership development. Participants perceived leadership as being built through interaction and experience. Further, participants saw the need for opportunities to be given for individuals to develop as leaders. Henry commented,

I would prefer that leadership development facilitate the interaction of the people who are to attend the course with people who are in the leadership position. I have attended classes or courses where they bring expatriates from the industry and you have a one-on-one interaction, and they ask questions. I think for me that is very important (INI).

Likewise Paul indicated that leadership development should be “hands-on-experience.” He further stated, “In this way, the institution can decide to set a certain amount of money aside for individuals who successfully complete the training to go out in the field and get some practical

training.” These comments signify that the participants believed that leadership development was not complete without experiential learning.

Summary

The data suggested that the participants perceived leadership development as an interplay between self-development and institutional initiatives. Understanding the self as a leader essentially entailed possessing self-knowledge and being able to self-manage. Self-knowledge referred to the ability to understand the core of one’s being or finding one’s own voice or “essence.” Self-management referred to the leaders’ acute awareness of his or her skills and his or her place in the leadership relationship. The participants also believed that effective self-management in leadership also referred to a leader’s capacity to manage emotions such as anger and to articulate dissenting opinions. However, maturing as a leader requires a combination of leadership education, opportunity, skill development, and experiential learning.

Summary of Chapter

Chapter Four presented an initial analysis of the data that were collected in the study. The first section presented data on the participants’ perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences. The second section presented data on the participants’ conceptualizations of leadership development. The findings were placed in categories which were further broken down into themes. Initial data analysis revealed that the participants deemed leadership as positive when they were being authentic, learning in their roles, and producing results. The data also suggested that participants saw leadership as effective when the head leader of their organization was present when critical decisions were to be made. The second section of the chapter revealed that the participants conceptualized leadership development in terms of two broad themes (a) self-development, and (b) institutional initiatives.

In order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives of their most positive leadership experiences, In Chapter Five, I will further unpack or "re-search" thematic findings that were subsumed under the broad categories of leadership as "being," leadership as "learning," leadership as "doing," and leadership as "quasi-hierarchical." I will also re-examine the participants' conceptualizations of leadership development and offer an interpretation of these perceptions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Level 2 Analysis: A Search for Deeper Meaning

With all thy getting get understanding (Proverb 4:7)

Introduction

In Chapter Four, I provided rich, thick accounts of the participants' most positive leadership experiences and their conceptualizations of leadership development. In reviewing the data gathered numerous themes emerged both individually and collectively that revealed the many faces of leadership. Having examined the categories and themes, I proceeded to assemble key bits of data into a coherent pattern in order to comprehend all that was happening. This process of searching for a deeper meaning into the experiences of the participants was holistic and resulted in "affective" judgements. It was holistic, in that, I used an interpretation panel to challenge my assumptions, provide fresh insights, and offer varying interpretations. Additionally, I requested my participants' feedback on my interpretations of their stories, as well as the selection of categories and themes. However, it was also "affective" because my thoughts, emotions, preconceptions, and frame of reference worked together to extract meaning from the participants' experiences. This process of interpretation supports claims made by "sage" qualitative scholars that (a) realities are multiple and constructed and must therefore be studied holistically (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and (b) "it is illusory to suppose that interaction between inquirer and subject can be eliminated" (Owens, 1982, p. 6). It is a dynamic relationship, each influencing the other.

Accordingly, this synthesis offers an interpretation of the data that is derived from the participants' experiences as well as my personal interactions with the participants. In this Chapter, I "re-search" key concepts of the participants' perspectives that were subsumed under the three concepts of positive leadership ("being," "learning," and "doing") and show how these

three concepts are interconnected. Importantly, in this chapter I repeat some of the participants' words used in Chapter Four. I use this method to honour the voices of the participants and to show how their words led to the conclusions I presented. I also highlight the relationships among the concepts and identify linkages to the literature. Further, I re-examine the outlier, leadership as "quasi-hierarchical," and the participants' conceptualization of leadership development and connect these perspectives to previous discourse on the phenomena of leadership and leadership development.

Leadership as "Being": A Deeper Look into the Emotional Dimension of Leadership

As was discussed earlier the concept of leadership as "being" refers to *who you are* as a leader and highlights the emotional dimension of leadership. Leadership as "being" suggests a radical shift from the traditionally accepted view of leadership as a mechanical, emotionally detached process of "being" in control, ultra-rational and results-driven. It represents a more emotionally intelligent, mindful and connective style of leadership. Such leadership behaviours, as represented in the data, include projecting feelings rather than words, evoking words of encouragement rather than criticisms, and showing authentic care to the student members.

One defining characteristic of leadership as "being" that emerged from the data was the concept of emotionality and its place in the leadership relationship. Emotionality has long been viewed secondary to reason and logic, as rather destructive to rationality (Solomon, 1976). In the field of leadership, emotionality has been portrayed as opposite to rationality and/or leadership effectiveness (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Traditional views of leadership effectiveness were predicated on the leader's ability to detach him/herself from emotions, and engage in rigorous intellectual discourse. The participants' leadership experiences, however supports claims made by more recent research that an expression of emotions such as empathy allows a

leader to transcend a deeper level of connection and so engage his/her constituents in more meaningful and impactful ways (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

Empathy: Projecting Feelings over Words

The participants implied that empathy was a conduit for engaging their constituents and one of the factors that created an enabling environment for their members. When Simone related her experience with a student that came to her for help, she talked about how difficult it was for her to hold back her emotions, “I am trying so hard to hold back my tears...I was crying with her and I was saying to myself ‘I am not gonna make a good leader if I keep crying with people’. But I just couldn’t stop.” The fact that Simone cried with that student who came to her for help created a space for her to be in tune with the student as a person first. Her tears were in a sense, her response to that student. Though she did not use words, her tears spoke volumes. Simone’s tears communicated her deep feelings of compassion and an understanding of the student’s emotional state. The expression of her true feelings through tears enabled a personal connection which might not have happened through words. Simone stated, “I just feel like I connected with her on a very personal level.” The expression of tears in this context suggests that Simone was in tune with the student’s suffering. Though she did not explain her thoughts verbally, her tears eloquently spoke about her feelings of compassion for the student and became an important part of her leadership experience.

Simone’s emotional contact with the student she helped did not only facilitate a personal connection but also created a bond of trust. She related how the student opened up her home to her and expressed secret things she did that were not accepted in her Islamic culture. The student felt a level of comfort and camaraderie with Simone, and so was able to tell her about these things. Simone related, “She invited me to her dormitory for dinner and showed me pictures of

her and her friends back home inside wearing short dresses and drinking booze. But outside they would have scarves and jeans.”

Additionally, Simone’s tearful emotional expression did not make her less of a leader, as she initially thought it would. Rather, it strengthened her relationship and made her more connected and respected. This is evidenced by the email that Simone received from the student stating, “No one ever treated her like a real person except for you.” In Simone’s experience, leadership and emotions are not incongruent; they are two pieces that fit perfectly together.

Simone’s connectedness to her own emotions and her ability to effectively communicate emotionally with others made her an effective leader. This finding is supported by research that suggests that empathy is an important variable that is critical to emotional intelligence and leader effectiveness (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; George, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Humphrey (2002) defined empathy as “the desire to understand others’ feelings and the ability to do so” (p. 496). Other scholars in the field of emotional intelligence perceived empathy as a critical skill in leadership which enables people to maintain positive interpersonal relationships (George, 2000; Mehrabian & Epstein; 1972; Wispe, 1986). Additionally, the notion of empathy as a creator of positive and meaningful leadership relationships is supported by the theory of positive psychology and the concept of Positive Organizational Scholarship as a way of producing positive outcomes in individuals and organizations (Cameron et al, 2005; Froman, 2010). Simone’s empathetic expression towards the student produced a positive and meaningful relationship as she was able to both win the student’s trust and make her feel valued.

Simone’s deep compassion for this individual was characterized not only by the emotional expression of tears but also by the physical action of working steadfast to secure her accommodation. She responded not only with her emotions but with her actions. Simone

described the effort she put forth, “I tried so hard and finally got her housing.” Simone’s efforts suggest that for her, positive leadership was not just about being emotionally connected. It was also about responding to that drive to achieve results and to take the initiative. I submit that Simone did not only manifest leadership as “being” but also leadership as “doing.” Although leadership as “being” and leadership as “doing” are different, Simone’s leadership experience shows how she manifested both. She was able to build relationships and produce results—a winning combination.

Henry also expressed empathy in his leadership experience, though in a different way than Simone. He expressed, “I was conversing with a student and she just opened up and was crying...I decided to listen to her for the whole day, I didn’t go anywhere.” Henry expressed his compassion by dedicating time to listen to the student’s needs. He communicated with her in a positive and caring manner, not necessarily through words but by the positive emotion of listening. Importantly, like Simone, Henry did not just listen but took on a “can-do attitude.” He related, I sought out all the services to help her pay her rent and to eat.” Henry made great efforts to make the student feel valued; by doing so he formed a meaningful connection. In his conversation with me he stated quite gleefully, “I kept contact with her. She finished her Master’s and got a big job. We are still in contact.” Henry was able to connect emotionally with the student by listening to her share her story. This emotional connection propelled him to action to make a tangible difference in her life. Yet again, there is an interweaving of leadership as “being” and leadership as “doing.” The result of such combination was the forging of positive impressions and actual results.

My participants’ stories have led me to conclude that their expressions of empathy were manifested through their various attempts to satisfy the emotional needs of the individuals whom

they served or with whom they came into contact. Empathy enabled the participants to create bonds of trust. It sharpened their ability to detect when people needed more than just advice, and it compelled them to action. Their empathetic nature allowed them to respond to individuals in such a way that showed that they acknowledged their concerns in an individualistic and personal manner.

The participants' empathetic nature was a considerable factor in the level of satisfaction and effectiveness they experienced in their interaction with others. As reflected in the literature review Gardenswartz et al (2010) agreed that "the more one understands and manages emotional responses, the more one enjoys greater comfort in relationships, effectiveness in interactions, and inner peace" (p. 76). This claim is compatible with the findings of my research, as Simone's ability to share the emotional experiences of other individuals made her more "resonant" and gave her more facility in communicating with people. She was referred to as someone who had a "greater sense of common good" than most people and she related the satisfaction or "inner peace" that she enjoyed by interacting with people on a daily basis.

Empathy allowed the leaders to respond with insight and awareness, thereby authenticating their decisions. For example, Henry carefully considered the well-being of the students that came to him for help. His empathetic nature gave him the impetus to seek out all the services he could in order to create a low stress environment for the student who expressed her struggles to him. Likewise, Simone's seemingly "soft-side" allowed her to try "so hard" to secure a student accommodation. Importantly, empathy which is often referred to as the "soft stuff" in leadership led to "hard" evidence that it can be used to improve people's situation in important ways. I argue that the participants' empathetic disposition was a fundamental

leadership strength that yielded multiple interrelated benefits such as the facilitation of individual growth and social connections.

Importantly, though the empathetic leader personage was mostly evident in a woman's revelations of her leadership journey, this study found no evidence to suggest that women are more empathetic than men or lead with more compassion than do men. I suggest that empathy is a more dominant feature in Simone's portrait, rather than a unique one. In support of my argument, the literature review reflects findings from research which suggest that empathy is not a fixed trait. That is, it is not necessarily identifiable in any particular gender or leadership style but like other competences it can be learned, nurtured and enhanced (Goleman, 2000; Taylor & Bagby, 2000; Scarfe, 2000; Shapiro, 2002).

Positive Affect: Using Words to Bring out the Best

For the participants, leadership was positive not only when they were committed to give full creativity, time and talent, but also when they were encouraged and allowed to do so. Leadership becomes transforming when the leader "seeks to draw out, inspire, and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out" (Covey, 1998, p. xii). The participants' words suggest that, through positive affirmations from other individuals, they were inspired to reach deeper within themselves to accomplish their mission to serve. The feature of positive affect allowed for the building up and motivation of the participants' potential and personal belief in their abilities.

Consistent with the "broaden-and-build" theory, a positive psychological climate can allow individuals to develop and use their potential to become more effective in their work (Fredrickson, 2001). The "broaden-and-build" theory of positive emotions indicate that when individuals are appraised of their work and their qualities, they can amplify what they are already

doing well. This may lead to upward spirals of performance and increase their positive impact on other team members. The participants' leadership experiences suggested that positive affirmation served as a motivation and produced ripple effects. The idea of positive affirmation producing ripple effects is supported by Whitney et al (2010). Whitney et al (2010) noted that when people's best attributes are illuminated "it is like the sun: when it radiates, people feel it, and are warmed by it – and are therefore eager to give their best" (p. 59). For example, the affirmation that Paul received from his peers in his early years of student leadership gave him confidence. His newfound confidence gave him the "impetus to provide leadership when needed." He had the urge to lead, to improve his leadership skills, and to add other qualities that he deemed admirable to his repertoire of competencies.

Similarly, the positive responses that Karen received from members of the student population when she planned events were a motivation "to do more," to challenge herself, and to become more creative. The practice of recognition and affirmation can therefore empower individuals to believe in future success as it broadens their habitual modes of acting and thinking (Fredrickson, 2001). The positive feedback enabled the participants to continually improve their leadership skill to match the challenges of leadership.

According to Whitney et al (2010) this new generation of leaders wants "to be acknowledged for a job well done" (p. 2). Whitney et al's claim is supported by the participants' experiences in this study. The participants revealed that their "unofficial mentors" guided their choices and helped them to make the right decisions through providing them with recognition and positive feedback for their efforts. Further, the participants reported that they were encouraged, affirmed, and appreciated for their leadership initiatives early in their leadership experiences and this positive affirmation helped them to take on more challenging roles.

Authentic Care

The participants related that the organization they led was one that was authentic in its care for students. Noddings (1992) asserted that care is a necessity for all human beings. In the domains of leadership, caring is a “special relation.” To care as a leader, involves more than interest in the financial bottom-line (Froman, 2010; Noddings, 1992). It signifies seeking out, striving to understand and then responding to the needs of individuals with fairness and empathy. Caring leaders see people as ends in themselves, rather than as means to an end (Spears & Lawrence, 2002). Leading with care is leading beyond self, it is responding to a moral purpose, a higher calling. Greenleaf (1998) noted that authentic leadership emerges when leaders’ primary motivation is to help others. The participants manifested a student-centered approach in their leadership practices. In their views, their commitment to student services signified spending time or focusing their efforts in areas that will build solid and impactful connections with the students they lead. This was evident in Paul’s comment, “We have to make sure that any one student who comes to us feels a part of our system. We have to impact them in some way.” Likewise, it was evident in Karen’s statement, “The creation of a feeling of environment is the way for us to show our appreciation of students.” The principles of transformational leadership align with the participants’ beliefs. Northouse (2004) outlined that “transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms individuals. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals, and includes assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings” (p. 169). The participants’ motivation was to show that they valued the student members by satisfying their needs.

The opposite of the student-centered approach is the “profit-driven” approach. According to Simone “the undergraduate student organization is run like a business” driven by “the amount

of students which then transfers into fees.” The business model seemed to suggest a more transactional approach, an exchanged based process of leadership (Burns, 1978) which Simone believed was devoid of genuine care and connectivity. I submit that the “profit-driven” approach to which Simone alluded suggest the detached, goal-achievement centered and hierarchical concept of leadership previously discussed in chapter Two. For Simone, if she was to equate her organization with that of a business, it would require a radical shift in the organizational structure, much like the inverted pyramid depicted in Figure 5.1.

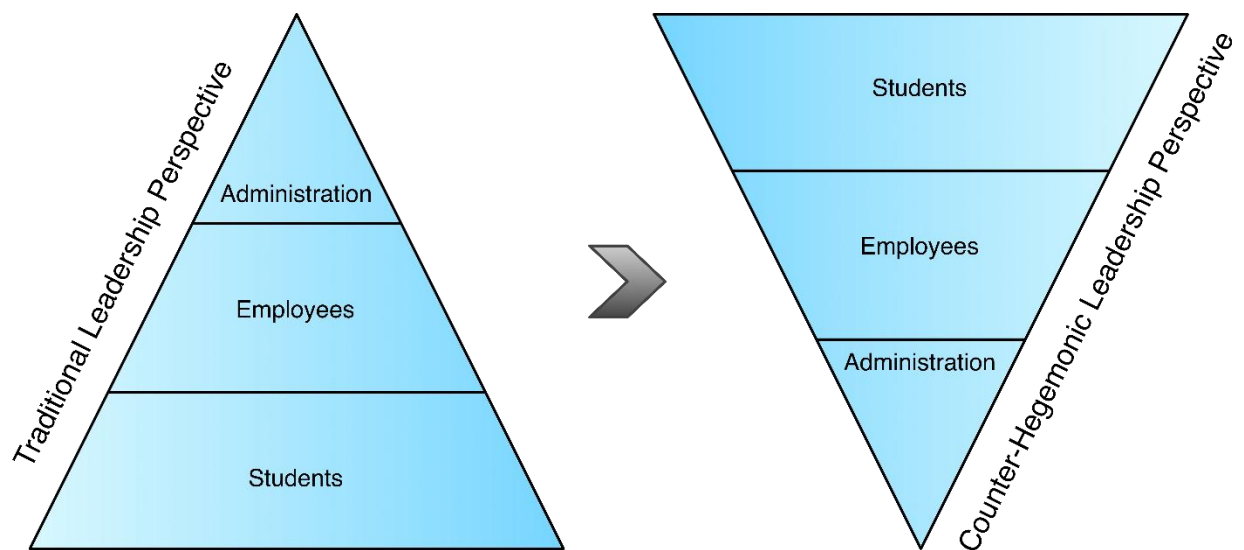


Figure 5.1: The inversion of the organizational pyramid

Simone’s conceptualization of a university structure is one in which students are the “bosses.” In this inverted model, the power relation shifts. The members of the interpretation panel surmised that this conceptualization suggests a counter-hegemonic leadership stance, in which the existing model of students at the lowest level of the organization is transformed into a structure which elevates students as the core decision makers, the policy directors and the

advocates for change. The students become the most important and the administration becomes the least important.

Philosophically, the inversion of the typical organizational pyramidal structure reverses the roles of the individuals in the organization. In the inverted structure leadership is about working for the students. The students become responsible for their learning and accomplishments and the leadership of the organization becomes responsive to their concerns, emotional well-being, and desire for self-actualization. Being responsive suggests that the leadership of the organization operates in such a way as to help the students accomplish their goals; by so doing, it allows students to feel valued by the organization.

I submit that the notion of the upside-down pyramid to which Simone alluded is generally congruent with the provisions of what Greenleaf (1977) terms as servant-leadership, discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two. Servant-leadership “emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making” (Spears, 1998, p. 3). A true servant leader revels in his/her privilege to serve. In this regard, servant leaders view people as the highest priority. They emphasize the importance of caring and inclusivity as fundamental to the leadership relationship.

Conclusion

The expressed emotions of empathy, positive affect, and authentic care portrayed the participants’ student organization as a human institution, and revealed that leadership is an intrinsically emotional process. Consistent with the notion of positive leadership expressed in the literature review, the portrayal of these emotions led to an environment of connectivity and engagement. Through these emotional dispositions, the people-centric, inclusive, and team-oriented leadership styles of the participants were revealed. Leadership proved to be essentially

transformative, as the Graduate Student Leaders actively sought to satisfy the student's needs while, at the same time, were conscious of and sensitive to their deep-rooted purpose and aspirations for their organization.

Leadership as “Learning”: Valuing and Including the Other

As discussed in the previous chapter, the concept of leadership as “learning” suggests that the participants view their leadership experiences as positive and effective when they are constantly searching for better outcomes; trying to understand the perspectives; thoughts and behaviours of others, and engaging in a reflective process to improve their leadership. During the individual and focus group interviews the participants related their efforts to consciously engage their student members to co-create the future of their organization. They expressed that an aspect of their leadership experiences that was most positive and impactful was learning to value and include others through engagement and community building, deep listening, and a sincere willingness to engage in reflection.

Engagement and Community Building

A careful analysis of the leadership perspectives and experiences of the participants revealed an understanding of leadership as occurring in relationships. The participants viewed the students as the organization's most valuable asset. This view is consistent with that of Bolman and Deal's (2008) use of the metaphor of organizations as families to express the interconnectedness of organization and people. Simone's comment, “We rely on students coming to us and needing us,” captures the symbiotic relationship between individuals and organizations. Karen related that, “We see ourselves as enablers of a community environment. We are here to facilitate the sharing of experiences...the creation of a feeling of environment is the way for us to show our appreciation of students.” Paul, when asked about what more he

would love to do in his leadership stated, “I would also find more innovative ways to be more engaging, to ensure that students participate more actively than they do.” Implicit in these statements is the desire to create a sense of “we” among a diverse group of people. The participants needed a place to express their talents and skills, and the organization needed students’ energy and participation to give meaning to its efforts. The participants both expected and encouraged their student members to participate and contribute for the good of the whole. The leadership principle employed was that of creating a humanistic organization, in which members would be engaged in a positive and harmonious environment, operating *with* the student leaders instead of *for* them.

Furthermore, creating a deep sense of relatedness among the students was a very important aspect of the participants’ leadership beliefs. Henry was willing to allow a student and her parents to live in his basement because of their inability to afford the residence for which they were qualified. He made efforts to secure them accommodation and concluded from that experience that in leadership one should “make time to connect with people and help them out in some way.” Karen stated, “I would love to see social events through which we can meet more people and show that we are welcoming and that we are here to represent them. We are there to give them a hand if that is what they need.” Paul communicated to me that his organization has been thinking about providing “a food business and a conference room so that graduate students can come here more often to use these services.” Karen also expressed that having succeeded at planning events that engaged the student members, she is propelled “to do more” and so she “start[s] to ask people, “What else do you want from me, what else do you want to see from us?” Simone expressed how excited she was to be “talking to students rather than to be home studying.” She stated that as a student leader she just wants to “talk to students all day, but not

for the sake of talking but for the sake of getting ideas.” She also communicated her desire to know her co-executive members, “Why they say the things that they say, and how their personalities work.” Evident among the participants were efforts for inclusion - to make people feel that they belong, to build relationships, and to move towards collaborative action.

As reflected in Chapter Two, the views that the participants had of leadership were similar to those of Rost (1991) described as collaborative, Kouzes and Posner (1998) as relational, Burns (1978) as transformational and purposeful and Whitney et al (2002) as inclusive. There was compelling evidence to suggest that the participants demonstrated the capacity to create a “we” culture among their student members. Their leadership efforts were purposeful, directed towards proving to students that they were valuable to them. For example, Henry’s decision to provide temporary housing for a graduate student and her family, who he did not know personally, suggested that attending to students’ needs was more valuable than “tasks, functions, roles, and positions (Gardner, 1993, p. 3). Paul’s plans to get child care spaces for his graduate student members was a clear sign that leaders seek not only to treat followers with respect, but also to serve by attending to their emotional well-being. Simone’s commitment to learn the “idiosyncrasies” of her team members indicated that one of the purposes of leadership was to seek to understand those we serve before seeking to be understood by them.

Through engagement and community building the participants demonstrated an obligation to “enact good governance for the benefit of the people” (Walker, 2011, p. 20) who they saw as their primary subjects. Graduate Student Leaders’ perceptions of positive leadership emphasized engagement and community building, working toward a shared vision, and creating a relational, empowering environment for student members.

Active Listening

By virtue of the accounts that participants gave about listening, it is clear that assuming a listening stance reconfigures the leadership process. That is, the listening leader creates a sense of psychological safety where individuals feel free to express uncertainty, confusion, and to communicate without fear. Paul created this psychological safety by giving student members “the opportunity to express their thoughts, to express their convictions.” Additionally, he ensured that he communicated to his student members that “every view is valuable.” He stated that “when you listen to others, you get the best from those views and you get others to respect the outcome of any process.” Henry related, “It doesn’t mean by listening that you are in agreement but that you are making an effort to understand what students are saying.” Further Paul communicated that “getting different perspectives helps in governance...you have to find the right channel to listen to the different views.” Paul and Henry’s perspectives on listening corroborate Srivastva and Barrets’s (1990) statement that “it is only through the experience of being heard that members’ true authentic voices can find full expression” (p. 395). Their statements also align with that of Whitney et al (2010) that when people “experience their ideas being listened to and validated, even if not acted on, they begin to share. When they see the leadership’s commitment to open, honest communication, they follow” (p. 99). Based on the participants’ statements about listening, one could state that active listening fosters inclusion and is the platform for collaborative action.

Participants spoke about the empowering gesture of listening as well as its importance as a leadership skill. Henry stated that “no one wants a leader who does not listen.” Simone noted that “in order to lead well you have to listen.” Karen stated that “[Paul] is a good leader. He listens, he appreciates.” Paul related that listening has “a lot of magic.” These conceptions of

listening are consistent with the views of appreciative leadership expressed in Chapter Two. The appreciative leader operates from the premise that individuals “want to be engaged and heard” (Whitney et al, 2010, p. 2) and that “all voices matter.” Accordingly, the participants expressed the importance of listening in leadership, positioning it as central characteristic for an effective leader and as crucial to the leadership process.

The participants’ perspectives on listening and its relationship to good leadership are consistent with those of Engleberg and Wynn (1997) who contended that “good leaders are good listeners . . . [who] do not fake attention, pretend to comprehend, or ignore members. Instead, they work as hard as they can to better understand what members are saying and how those comments affect the group and its goals” (p. 127). Other leadership scholars such as Bolman and Deal (2008) concluded that “taking time to hear people’s ideas, and concerns and to make sure that all involved have the talent, confidence, and expertise necessary to carry out their new responsibilities is a requisite for successful innovation” (p. 382).

Kelley (2000) emphasized that in order to listen “you must suspend your preoccupation with yourself-your needs, your image, your opinions, [and] your expertise-and enter the experience, mind and emotions of another person” (p. 4). The view Kelley embraced is substantiated by the participants’ discussion of the listening process. They alluded to some critical stages in the listening process that must not be circumvented in order for it to be completed. A visual representation is presented in Figure 5.2.

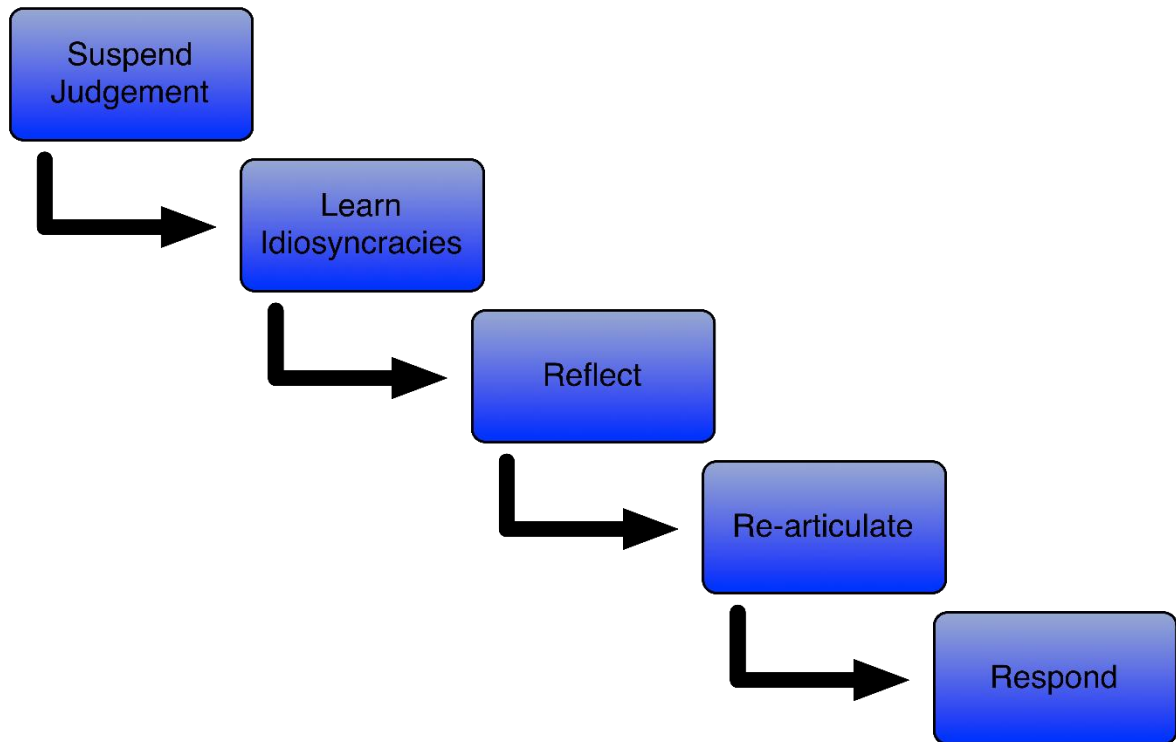


Figure 5.2: The process of active listening in leadership

According to the participants, active listening necessitates a suspension of judgment and assumptions. When one suspends judgments, one is able to learn from others, and carefully sift through other points of view. One suspends judgement by consistently critiquing his or her own assumptions, clarifying purpose and beliefs, and establishing a frame of reference. Without engaging in this process, decisions may be made based on hasty and faulty assumptions. Importantly, suspending judgement does not mean that one should withhold judgement; rather one should clearly state assumptions, fully explore the situation, and develop a thorough understanding for what is being expressed before making or moving forward with a decision.

After that first phase has taken place, the listener should reflect on what he or she heard. Reflection requires carefully monitoring the listener's developing assumptions, as well as constantly analyzing, re-organizing and reasoning with what he or she heard. After the process of

reflection, the listener should re-articulate or re-state what he or she heard in order to ensure that what the speaker said matched what the speaker intended. It is only after the completion of suspending judgment, learning idiosyncrasies, reflecting, and re-stating that the listener should respond. This concept of active listening takes practice, but once mastered can be done unconsciously. The participants' convictions on the importance of listening actively to stakeholders demonstrated their willingness to learn, their desire to serve, and humility in their leadership aura. The participants placed much value on listening in their leadership journey. It was a quality that they admired in leaders and also one that they eagerly sought to develop. Based on the experiences of the participants, listening, then, is not merely a desirable characteristic but a necessary skill for positive and effective leadership. Through the act of listening the participants were not only "being" connected and attentive to students' concerns but also "learning" to appreciate differences, to value others, and to collaborate in creating the future of their organization.

The participants' leadership behaviours indicated that they possessed a psychological maturity that enabled them to value others. Through efforts of engagement and community building, and active listening, the participants demonstrated that they were dependent upon their student members. They experienced joy at seeing others enjoy what they planned for them, and were intrinsically motivated to provide impactful leadership for their members. Their accounts of their leadership experiences supports research that indicated that leadership is engaging and interacting with others (Kouzes & Posner, 2008), serving others (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998), influencing and motivating others (Kotter, 1990), understanding and inspiring others (Bass & Avolio, 1994), and listening to others (Kelley, 2000 ; White, 1997). Common to all these

definitions, and evident in the participants' perspectives, is the idea that leadership is a process that is experienced with, by, and through others.

Engaging in Reflection

The participants in this study articulated how their leadership experiences were enhanced by learning to constantly reflect on their leadership practices. The process of reflection, as revealed from the data, suggested that the participants' examined their practices to see how much their action affected others. As a result of this reflection, they thought about ways to improve their leadership relationships. Paul stated, "I look at what I did in the day and so I am able to see how much respect I give to my fellow man and how much issues they have with me, and see how much I can improve." Similarly, Henry shared that reflection helped him to "look back at the happenings," to examine if what "I did negatively affected anyone and to then try to do better." He further added, "It helps me to grow." Reflection is a process through which the participants envisioned opportunities for positive change. It is a purposeful introspection in which the key outcome is to improve or enhance their leadership practice. Importantly, reflection creates dissonance, and it was from this dissonance that the participants were able to learn and grow.

Conclusion

Critical to the participants' experience in leadership was the openness to constantly learn and grow. They were able to learn by listening to others, building relationships, evaluating their behaviours, and seeking out better ways to effectively represent those who they served. Positive leadership experiences were framed around collective and interactive efforts to build interpersonal relationships in the community in which the leadership process was taking place

Leadership as “Doing”: Achieving Tangible Outcomes

The participants’ perspectives of positive leadership experiences were not limited to being “relationship-oriented,” but included being “results-oriented.” They expended effort to show some visible signs that changes were taking place in the organization as a result of their leadership, and they believed that accomplishing their mission as a group was crucial to their success. This was apparent in Paul’s remark,

We want to show students that we are impacting them. So like when we took up the decision to campaign to increase graduate student funding and we have done well with that the PhD students’ [stipends] were reviewed and increased. That is going to benefit our graduate students and we ensured that students know that we advocated for that.

Evident in Paul’s comments is the ability of the participants to strategize and to successfully lead a change agenda. They were able to “get the job done.” However, getting results had to be backed by effective communication to their student members that the positive changes that students were experiencing were a result of their combined efforts. Among all the views on leadership, leadership fails to be recognized as effective if leaders are not able to move their organization in the place it needs to go. As Henry put it, “No matter how good your intentions are at the end of the day people want to see results. They want evidence that you are working.” Henry’s statement is supported by that of Bennis (1999) who stated, “As leaders we can provide meaning, build trust, and foster hope, but all of that count for little unless an organization produces results” (p. 5). Implicit in both these statements is the notion that leadership that is positive and effective “gets results.” The kind of leadership that creates an atmosphere where people feel they belong and where they feel that their differences are valued is important, but these qualities are soon forgotten if leaders do not get results.

Results are obtained by taking action and moving with a sense of urgency. Henry aptly manifested the “doing” concept in his leadership. He shared, “When students come to me with pressing problems I like to go straight. Sometimes it depends on the situation like if I can talk to someone junior and they can do something. But otherwise I just go straight. I know that urgently something must be done.” For Henry, moving swiftly to action was imperative because by doing so his student members’ needs would be met quickly. His leadership was characterized by a focussed attention to the student members’ need and a compelling will to serve and to win; he wanted to get results. Henry also related, “I am like this. If we are supposed to fix a time to meet I will not say I will think about it. I hate that. If I can’t make it, I tell you I can’t make it. If I am late I will tell you that I am late. If there is something that I can do about I will. Reflected in his beliefs were the principles of servant-leadership. As a servant leader, he valued people’s time and desired to make a difference. He put the students’ need first. He was willing to bypass authority (“I wanted to go straight”) in order to help, to be of service. Importantly, For Henry, serving others was not just something he did; it was what is leadership was about. It was who he was a leader. Evident in these examples is an interconnectedness of the concepts of “being” and “doing” in leadership. “Being” of service was his true commitment to satisfy the needs of student members, and “doing” service was his obligation to provide evidence that his organization was effective.

Conclusion

Operating across the realms of “being,” “learning,” and “doing” in their leadership the Graduate Student Leaders were able to build trust, foster respect, deepen the quality of their relationships as well as produce life-affirming results. They viewed their leadership experiences as positive when they were making students feel significant, building relationships and

community, actively listening to stakeholders, giving positive feedback to others, and achieving tangible results. Essentially, as discussed throughout this chapter, the participants manifested the life-affirming, positive, and socially generative principles of appreciative leadership, servant-leadership, and transformational leadership.

A “Quasi –Hierarchical” Perspective of Leadership

Though the participants related their various leadership initiatives in the organization and their differing skills and varieties of expertise, their view of leadership as “quasi-hierarchical” was clear. When it came to some critical decisions, they refused to let go of the old-industrial era model of a top–down structure. Leadership boundaries became vital and the placing of responsibility for action and decision-making in the hands of the head leader became critical. When the participants were challenged to consider a web-like structure of leadership, they clung to the notion that a structure with someone at the top, who is able to offer that “central comment,” worked best.

Participants expressed that “things tend to work” when they kept within the imprimatur of the hierarchy. Indeed, this statement suggests an unwillingness to let go of the mental model that the participants had of leadership. According to Senge (1990) mental models can allow individuals to reject or block anything that is unfamiliar. The inner assumptions derived from a familiar mental model can dictate the actions, and behaviours of individuals and may be the reason why leaders refuse or express unwillingness to consider replacing time-honoured practices and prevailing cultural values and ways. Notably, the participants expressed the need to get everyone’s input in making a decision. Their statements clearly elucidated the value that they placed on seeking input from a number of different constituencies, suggesting their convictions for shared decision making. The paradox, however, is that though they believed in shared

decision-making, they could not stop themselves from “looking to the top” for a “central comment” to move forward. This “central comment” was a “sacred cow” that the participants were unwilling to give up.

Assessing the reasons why the participants held on to the notion of a structural form of leadership yields a host of possible explanations. Members of the interpretation panel, for example, proposed that this dependence on authority was as a result of the confidence that the participants had in the leader’s competence. The participants expressed a remarkable confidence in the abilities of the leadership of the group. They saw the leader as someone who had an eye for change and student engagement, who could provide both vision and reassurance to the organization’s members. Importantly, the leader was seen as an individual who could inspire by his personality, “he listens,” “he appreciates,” “he will provide alternatives,” and he was the best advocate for the needs of the group. Karen commented that she admired “his ability to sacrifice his time to go out to all those meetings.” She further related that she has “never met anyone who would pretty much spend six hours a day going to meetings whether it is meeting with administrators, just going out there and advocating for students.” This conviction and admiration for the leaders’ competence and genuine commitment to the leadership of the organization may be a reason for his subordinates’ desire for his “stamp of authority.” As a result, their desire for central authority could be a sign of organizational health, not trouble.

On the other hand, it could be that implicit in this aggrandizement of the top leader is the idea that the student leaders may not feel confident and capable enough to intelligently sift through issues, navigate decisions, and exercise authority. Participants may be bounded by an industrial perspective of leadership that leaders are leaders by virtue of their positions. The industrial perspective of leadership may be so ingrained that though student leaders exist within a

post-industrial society, they still desire a master concept for making sense of their own convictions. In this case, the signature of the head leader in the organization becomes a non-negotiable component of the decision making process.

Leadership Development as Self-Development

Integral to the participants' perceptions of leadership development was the idea of personally seeking to develop oneself as a leader. Leadership development was seen first and foremost as self-development. It consisted of the finding passion, recognizing limitations, managing emotions, harnessing values, and taking initiatives. Leadership development then, as perceived by the participants was a desire for self-actualization.

Passion

The participants revealed that leadership development entails an aggressive and interminable search for one's "essence" or one's passions. This search involves the engagement in deeper questioning about one's inclinations, discarding superficial thoughts and aiming to connect with our "essence," our passion, and need for self-actualization. Karen stated that in order for an individual to be passionate in leadership you have to "know what it is that you are protecting." Implicit in this quotation is that leadership development should be encased in finding and pursuing a particular passion for which a leader is willing to make sacrifices. It is an individual's choice to become involved. Karen further referred to passion as "possessing essence." This "essence" is the defining feature of one's individuality as a leader and is the factor that will lead to long lasting commitment in an individual's leadership practice. In sum, leading from a clear sense of personal purpose creates a successful and fulfilling leadership experience.

Self-Management

Self-development in leadership would not be complete with finding one's passion. A well-developed leader should also be able to manage emotions. That is, a leader needs to be able to stop, process, and refocus before making decisions, in order to respond appropriately and productively to situations. Participants expressed that daily interaction across differences such as cultures can trigger emotional responses that may lead to behaviors that may be perceived as undesirable. As a result, leaders should possess self-management which refers to the leader's acute awareness of his or her self and his or her place in the leadership relationship. Simone's inability to control her emotions, while in a meeting at the retreat that the participants had, led to the undesirable behavior of "talking out of turn" which in turn resulted in her being reprimanded. The perceived inabilities of parliamentarians to control their emotions in parliament sessions led Simone to liken them to children, incapable of managing themselves. Managing emotions is therefore a critical skill that the individual should seek to master so as to "create constructive effects rather than self-defeating and destructive results" (Gardenswartz et al., 2010, p. 76).

Values

In leadership development, understanding and managing oneself is not enough. Understanding one's preferences, values, and worldviews is critical to developing the self as a leader. According to Paul, and consistent with the ethical leadership construct presented in Chapter Two, values and worldviews become the "internal standard" that guides leadership behaviours. Values are the foundational teachings of honesty, fairness, justice, equity, integrity, caring for others, and respect for human dignity (Aronson, 2001; O'Connell & Bligh, 2009; Walker & Donlevy, 2006; Zhu, 2008). Paul stated that individuals should harness values from their religious upbringings and then translate those into public policy. Implicit in Paul's suggestion is the idea that there are certain unassailable principles that transcend all religions,

which, if they undergirded policies, would create a sane society. Additionally, Paul's response suggests that values should essentially benefit the "whole."

Paul's notion of values guiding leadership practices is similar to that of Covey's (1996) articulation of "principle-centered leadership" and Whitney et al's (1996) expression of appreciative leadership. Covey argued that basic principles in leadership include fairness, service, equity, justice, integrity, honesty, and trust. Covey further related that effectiveness in leadership "is predicated upon alignment with [these] inviolable principles" (p. 151). Operating upon their opposites will lead to "disintegration and destruction" of individuals and organizations. Similarly, Whitney et al (2010) noted that integrity or values in leadership allows leaders to "make choices that serve the whole" (p. 59). For Paul, harnessing values in one's leadership practices will ultimately lead to deepened relationships, collaboration, and trust.

Self-Awareness

The participants suggested that developing oneself as a leader would not be complete without the ability to recognize limitations. Henry expressed that knowing his limits was essential to his self-growth. Recognizing his limitations helped him to create and maintain boundaries that contributed to his maturing as a leader. According to Penn Behavioral Health (2008) "[b]oundaries are the invisible lines that are drawn to help define roles and interactions in relationships. When these lines are crossed, negative consequences may result" (p. 1). As a result, knowing how far one can go in the leadership relationship may lead to a more healthy and productive leadership experience.

Leadership development for the participants is a holistic approach that emphasizes the development of self in the process. It builds social habits and supports the authentic expression of an individual's strengths, vulnerabilities, and potentials.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented an interpretation of the data garnered in the study. Having analysed the data, from the categories, I extracted and developed themes that were prominent in the participants' articulation of their leadership experiences. A search for a deeper meaning into how the participants perceived their most positive leadership experiences revealed that leadership resided in the confluence of "being," "learning," and "doing." Leadership was a co-active process in which expressing emotions, receiving affirmations, acquiring new knowledge, and producing life affirming results acted as a force for elevated performance. The participants perceived leadership as an intrinsically emotional process, whereby leaders gain knowledge of followers' emotions through listening, appraising, and expressing authentic care. A further interpretation was that leadership development is quintessentially self-development. Leadership development and self-development are interwoven and understanding oneself as a leader involves the reflective process of understanding oneself as a person. Importantly, another interpretation that was gleaned from the data was that the industrial notion of leadership of the "man at the top" lingers and functions as a predictor of leadership success.

Consistent with the objective of this study, the following chapter examines how participants' perceptions of leadership and conceptualizations of leadership development may inform the creation of a leadership development program for student leaders in a college or university setting. Based on a synthesis of the data, this section brings the participants' preferences to life through a framework for a leadership development program. The framework presented is accompanied by explanations of the choice of each concept with justification based on previous research findings or excerpts from the participants' responses.

CHAPTER SIX

Level 3 Data Analysis: A Framework for a Leadership Development Program

Words matter – they not only make a difference, they literally bring things to life, creating the world as we know it (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010)

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) expressed that the purpose of an appreciative inquiry is “not so much mappings or explanations of yesterday’s world, but anticipatory articulations of tomorrow’s possibilities” (p. 50). Consistent with this perspective, I propose a framework for a leadership development program based on an incorporation of the perceptions of the participants’ most positive leadership experiences and the participants’ understanding of leadership development. I took this approach because I believe, and research supports the argument that creating a leadership development program for students without adequate inquiry into how they, the direct recipients, conceptualize leadership development, and perceive leadership may create a disconnection between the program developed and the practices and beliefs of its recipients. Identifying students’ perspectives is therefore critical to reconceptualising approaches to leadership development (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007).

The research took the form of an appreciative inquiry aimed at augmenting knowledge of the leadership practices of the participants. An Appreciative Inquiry is defined as “an affirmative approach for evaluating and envisioning future initiatives based on best practice” (Shuayb, Sharp, Judkins, & Hetherington, 2009). I focussed on the most positive aspects of student leadership practices at the institution in order to build on those practices and advance student leaders’ understanding of leadership and leadership development.

According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) “everything is designed in conversations” (p. 198). Through dialogue with the participants about leadership and leadership development and the analysis and interpretation of the participants’ conversations, I constructed

a leadership development program model (see Figure 4.4.). The model is graphically represented in concentric circles to express the interrelatedness or wholeness of leadership development for the participants. Based on the data, I extracted four domains (represented as circles) that would form the core of a leadership development program. Integrated throughout all aspects of the model and represented as a circle in motion, is the first domain. It reflects the concepts of “being,” “learning,” and “doing” as expressed in Chapters Four and Five. This suggests that by employing this model, leaders will be consistently operating within the three realms.

- “Being”: Leaders are emotional, authentic, relational, inclusive, and collaborative.
- “Learning”: Leaders are learning, understanding, and valuing the worth and potential within themselves and others.
- “Doing”: Leaders are producing tangible outcomes. They are consistently investing their personal power in a way that provides happiness and satisfaction for others.

I submit that an emphasis of these core concepts could enable constructive forces and resources for the development of positive energy in student leaders and their organizations. The model is also named the “Being,” “Learning” and “Doing” leadership development model suggesting the emphasis of these concepts, as well as for convenience in reference to it.

The second domain represents the leadership skills and attitudes that the program seeks to develop. Based on the data gathered in the study, the concepts of interest as they relate to the domain of leadership skills and attitudes are:

- emotional intelligence
- positive self-concept beliefs
- technological skills

- interpersonal skills
- critical thinking skills
- commitment to service
- collaborative thinking
- intercultural competence
- visioning
- systems thinking
- empowering constituents
- divergent thinking

I submit that each leadership skill or attitude within this domain is necessary, if the individual is to have a positive and rewarding leadership experience.

The third domain represents the components of the courses that will be taught in the program. Based on the findings that emerged from questions one and two, a leadership development program should emphasize the following components of leadership: education, action, reflection, networking, empowerment, and recognition.

The arrows refer to the specific responsibilities of a facilitator for the delivery of the program in order to achieve the intended outcomes. These tasks include creating opportunities for mentoring and coaching, organizing retreats and, action learning sessions.

At the heart of the model is the fourth domain - the program outcomes. It establishes the kind of leaders that the program will create. The program aims to create leaders who are, among other things, servants, appreciative, ethical, transformational, and emotional.

I also utilized previous research findings on leadership development to substantiate my argument that these domains and their specified components of interest are relevant for effective and positive leadership.

The chapter further presents a brief elaboration of the structural components of the program framework. The framework does not claim to be all-inclusive or complete. Essentially, it is a skeleton of the critical components that would prove beneficial in the development of a comprehensive leadership development program.

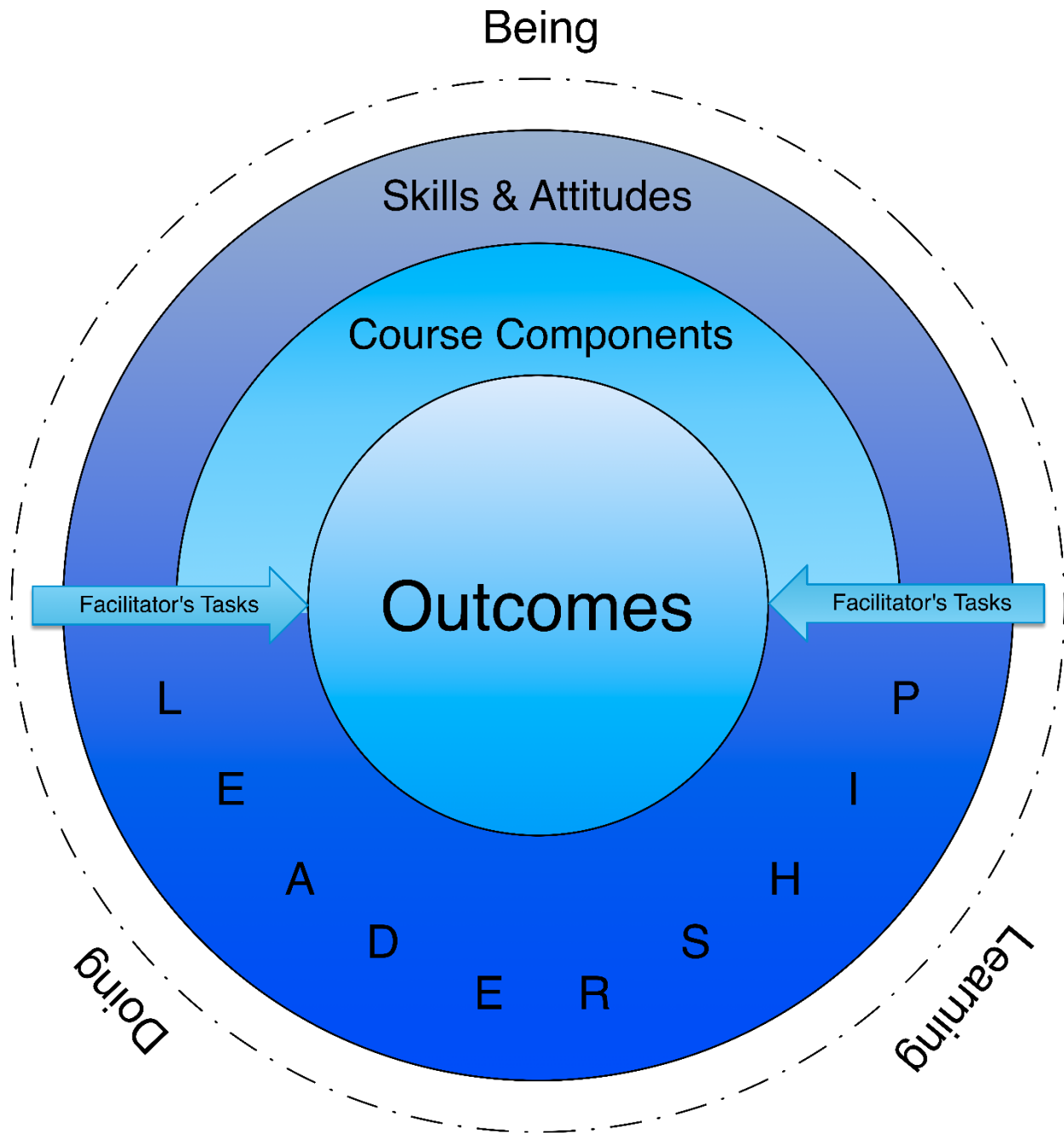


Figure 6.1: The “Being,” “Learning” and “Doing” student leadership development program model

Leadership Skills and Attitudes

This leadership development framework is highly contextualized as it first identifies the leadership skills and attitudes of focus and then seeks to develop those through the course components. Identifying the competencies of interest is crucial to program conceptualization and delivery as it creates the context upon which the program is designed. Based on the participants' stories, this framework specifies leadership skills and attitudes necessary for developing the self, the team, and the organization.

Self-development

Emphasizing individual-based skills and abilities in leadership development and training is one way of ensuring that the individual leader is equipped to perform effectively in leadership roles, at least from a traditional individualistic leadership perspective (Day, 2001). Leadership development practices, have, therefore emphasized the development of emotional intelligence, positive self-concept beliefs, interpersonal, and technological skills.

The data revealed that the participants believed that emotional intelligence was necessary for an individual to develop as a leader. Melissa suggested that a leadership development program should seek to enhance the cognitive and critical thinking skills. Melissa also highlighted the importance of technological skills, given that we are now functioning in a deep technological environment.

Emotional Intelligence (EI). Within the leadership as “being” category, the concept of the emotional dimension of leadership emerged. Participants suggested that their abilities to connect with the emotions of other individuals proved rewarding to their leadership practices and leadership development. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) related that EI is a set of competencies that allows an individual to accurately perceive, assess and generate emotions so as

to promote intellectual and emotional growth. Studies that evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development programs using concepts from Emotional Intelligence have found that it plays a significant role in predicting outstanding leader performance (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002; Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Positive self-concept beliefs. Highly effective leaders are those who are more attuned with themselves and their social worlds (Barton & Snook, 2002; Hall, 2004; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). Accordingly, a major component of leadership development has been enhancing leaders' capacities to gain better insight into themselves and their social interactions across various organizational levels. Karen noted that understanding oneself and one's passion is crucial to developing oneself as a leader. She also alluded to the importance of leaders in understanding the worth and value that they bring to an organization. The participants referred to enhancing awareness of the spiritual, emotional, and mental self in order for the leader to engage in honest self-assessment and reflection. Specifically, Paul emphasized the importance of "passive contagion" in leadership development. Choosing one's associates wisely is crucial to the development of oneself as a leader as it affects the leaders' self-confidence. As a result, the development of positive self-concept beliefs is essential in this leadership development program framework.

Technological skills. The participants spotlighted technological skills as necessary for leadership development. Given the influx of technology, there is now increased need for leaders to develop their skills for virtual collaboration. The twenty first century leader needs to understand the importance of the social media tools and should be able to engage subordinates in the technological revolution (Deiser & Newton, 2013).

Along with emotional intelligence, positive self-concept beliefs, and technological competencies, the participants listed interpersonal skills as crucial to leadership development.

Interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills refer to the leader's ability to interact with and influence people. Influencing and shaping the behaviour of people within any organization are necessary for effective leadership (House & Mitchell, 1974; Maxwell, 1998; Yukl, 2006). Additionally, interpersonal skills comprise social perceptiveness which is the ability of leaders to interpret why individuals react the way they do (Mintzberg, 1973; Yukl, 1989). It refers to negotiation skills which is the ability of leaders to reconcile differences among employee perspectives and ultimately create mutually beneficial relationships (Mintzberg, 1973; Mumford, Campion, Moregeson, 2007). Finally, it refers to persuasion skills which may be defined as the ability of leaders to influence others towards achieving a particular objective (Katz, 1974; Mintzberg, 1973; Yukl, 1989). Aspects of interpersonal skills that participants highlighted in their conversations were active listening, positive affirmation, engagement, and community building. These concepts emerged within the "being" and "learning" categories.

Team Development

A fundamental expectation of leadership development is enhanced interaction between the leader and his/her social environment. Leadership development that is focused on teams should, therefore, result in leaders exercising their capacity to build networked relationships, engage in team work, recognize collective tasks, and encourage inclusivity (Day, 2001; Drath & Palus, 1994). Leadership development from this perspective is viewed through both individual and relational lenses. Developmental expectations are, therefore, grounded in a relational model of leadership (Komives et al, 2007), which requires leaders to display, among other qualities, commitment to service, shared/collaborative leadership, and intercultural consciousness. The

participants' emphasized the importance of team development. Karen and Melissa noted the efforts that they expend to make individuals feel part of a team. Simone emphasized the importance of knowing and accepting team members. Through efforts of engagement Paul and Henry sought to position the organization as a team that made others feel welcomed and valued.

Commitment to service. A large volume of the data revealed that participants viewed their leadership experiences as most positive when they were serving others. Leadership thinkers such as Greenleaf (1977), Senge (1990), and Spears and Lawrence (2002) have cited service in leadership as a critical leadership competency. Serving others over self in leadership is the servant-leader's first priority. It requires that leaders suspend the need for control and authority and show respect for other's background, experiences and socializations. A commitment to service requires that leaders display empathy and unqualified acceptance of the people they serve. Greenleaf (1996) suggested that commitment to service in leadership also demands other skill sets such as listening, healing, awareness, and community building. Leaders who are dedicated to service display a high level of attentiveness and are committed to understanding others. Commitment to service was dominant across all three categories of "being," "learning," and "doing."

Collaborative thinking. The participants perceived leadership as positive when they were involved in collaborative activities and working across various networks. Rost (1993) noted that leadership development in the new millennium "must teach people how to think and be collaborative in leadership relationships" (p. 108). Sharing/Collaboration are leadership competencies that allow leaders to demonstrate a respect for collective achievement, show responsibility, and display a sense of awareness of the talents and expertise of others.

Intercultural consciousness. In the leadership as “learning” category, participants mentioned that they encountered differences in perspectives through cultural barriers, rather than race and age. As a result, the development of intercultural consciousness was deemed essential in creating a program for leadership development. The intercultural training literature highlights respect, tolerance for ambiguity, managing psychological stress, and communication skills as necessary to navigate diversity across cultures (Gertsen, 1990; Hannigan, 1990; Searle & Ward, 1990). Moreover, a criticism that was cited in the literature review was that student leadership development models did not address developing cross-cultural skills. Accordingly, incorporating this skill represents advancement in the literature on student leadership programs, and suggests a direct response to the need for appreciation of differences across cultures.

Organizational Development

Visioning. In speaking about Paul, the leader of the organization, Henry mentioned, “If it weren’t for his vision and his way of leadership, then I don’t think we would be whatever we are.” Simone stated that “the vision that Paul has for the organization I think is what is driving a lot of it.” Visioning therefore emerged as a competency that needs to be cultivated through leadership development. Kouzes and Posner (2008) conducted research on student leadership development and concluded that the leader must be able to envision a future for his or her organization and inspire customers and colleagues on the “exciting and ennobling possibilities ahead” (p. 13). Nanus (1992) related that a vision that is measurable and well-articulated is the most powerful engine driving an organization towards excellence and long range success.

Systems thinking. Systems thinking was a dominant theme in the leadership as “learning” category. Simone believed that it was important as a leader of any organization to be able to see the whole instead of segmented parts. Senge (1990) classified the “wholeness”

worldview as “systems thinking.” Senge articulated that when leaders view the organization as a whole instead of defined within specific parts, they are less likely to misinterpret organizational issues. As a result, developing leaders as ‘big picture’ thinkers may prove beneficial to the twenty first century milieu.

Empowering subordinates. The participants related that the leader of their organization took into consideration their varying perspectives before making any decision. They also commented that he allowed them autonomy over tasks and resources. This leadership behavior was classified as “empowerment.” The participants suggest empowerment as a necessary competency in organizational leadership. Bolman and Deal (2008), as well as Gardner (1993) related that the benefits to be derived from an empowered workforce are invaluable. Empowered employees engage in risk-taking, creative conflicts, and display a sense of competency and impact.

Divergent thinking. “[T]hinking outside of the box” was spotlighted as crucial to leadership development. Participants spoke about novel ideas, taking risks and building new strategic partnerships. The concept of divergent thinking thus emerged as an organizational competence that can be promoted by leadership training.

Course Components

The data suggested that leadership education is enveloped in deliberate attempts by the institution to craft courses that expose students to leadership theories, characteristics, practices, and contemporary leadership issues with an aim to nurture, enhance, and foster leadership capacities.

Leadership through Education

Most of the participants indicated that leadership courses should be offered by the institution as an opportunity for students to further develop themselves as leaders. Therefore, a model that emphasizes leadership education may help in the design of courses that deepens students' theoretical understandings through introducing a diverse range of leadership practices. These courses should also seek to develop a personal understanding and commitment to leadership within students and facilitate students' personal growth and development.

Leadership through Action

Based on students' view of leadership as action-and-results-oriented, a leadership development program for student leaders in a university context may reap benefits from a model that is focussed on actual involvement in leadership facilitated by experiential and service learning. Given the findings presented, a fundamental expectation of leadership development is enhanced interaction between the leader and his/her social environment. Both experiential and service- learning may serve to provide students with the opportunity to relate the pedagogies, theories and, personal competencies developed through leadership action with real life situations. Developing a program that involves a focus on the civic engagement of students through partnerships, scholarship or community-based research with local communities or the campus environment may help in students' development, as well as make them rounded individuals prepared to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Leadership through Reflection

Based on the data, reflection was deemed a rewarding leadership practice. A program that facilitates the reflective process through planned and emergent reflective sessions may provide the opportunity or space to make careful considerations about individuals' practices. Densten,

Gray, and Judy (2001) related that reflection “can provide leaders with a variety of insights into how to frame problems differently, to look at situations from multiple perspectives or to better understand followers” (p. 120). Through reflection individuals may become attentive to their thinking, and this attentiveness may translate their positive leadership actions into leadership habits or attitudes. Reflective processes may also help students to discard those actions that thwart progress or inhibit positive change.

Leadership through Networking

The participants related the need for leadership development to teach skills such as writing skills, technology-related skills, organizational skills, and critical thinking skills. These skills could be developed through networking across other institutions or departments within an institution. Incorporating developmental activities that foster a broader individual network may be necessary to enhance the leadership capacity of individuals to work within and across groups and teams. Networking may serve to expose student leaders to other peoples’ thinking, thereby expanding their understanding of organizational issues. It may also encourage students to form relationships, bonds and commitments with other individuals outside of their immediate leadership space. This approach may allow leaders to exchange ideas and perspectives with leaders across different disciplines and practice. Day (2001) suggested that networking develops leaders beyond merely knowing *what* and *how* to knowing *who* are key problem-solving resources. Networking can expose individuals to other peoples’ thinking, thereby expanding their understanding of organizational issues. It also encourages employees to form relationships, bonds and commitments with other individuals outside of their immediate work group. Networking, as an approach to leadership development, may foster peer relationships that offer a

unique value for leadership development based on the mutual obligation of trust, honesty, and integrity.

Leadership through Empowerment

Listening to the perspectives of others and creating space for dissenting opinions were critical to the participants' understanding of positive leadership. Issues confronting leadership at the organizational level may be ambiguous, ill-defined, complex, and novel. The resolutions of these issues may, therefore, demand varying perspectives from different individuals at different levels of the organization. However, voices may remain silent if individuals within the organization do not feel a sense of trust and ownership. Creating a program that teaches leaders the concept of providing their constituents with the authority to make decisions, as well as allowing them autonomy over resources may help these leaders achieve optimal results in their own student organizations, as well as other organizations. It may also help them to maximize results in organizations in the workforce of which they will inevitably be a part.

Other than teaching student leaders the benefits of empowerment, the program should also empower student leaders by allowing them to make influential decisions about course development, design, and platforms of delivery, as well as provide students the space to engage in risk-taking, and creative conflicts.

Leadership through Recognition

Goleman (2002) noted that “[t]he fundamental task of leaders is to prime good feeling in those they lead.... that occurs when a leader creates resonance – a positivity that frees the best in people” (p. IX). The participants expressed that recognizing and appraising the efforts of others in their leadership journey boosted the morale of others and encouraged them to continue and to improve in their leadership practice. Similarly, the student leaders communicated that when their

efforts are affirmed, they are motivated to do more of what they are doing. Two participants also highlighted that certificates or some other tangible means of recognition could be given to student leaders who complete leadership training. Participants suggested that recognition can increase engagement and increase individual productivity. Duclos (n.d) stated that “employees, who don’t feel appreciated, make less effort. In their eyes the “psychological contract” has not been respected by their boss/company.” As a result, incorporating teaching on the importance of recognition and positive affirmation in leadership can help student create and sustain positive emotions in their organizations.

The Facilitator’s Tasks

Based on the identified leadership skills and attitudes, the facilitator of the program will be expected to develop and organize activities that can buttress and give significance to student leadership development. Given the leadership skills and attitudes identified in this framework, those tasks would include, among others, creating opportunities for mentoring, organizing retreats, and action learning activities.

Mentoring

Mentoring was highlighted as an institutional initiative that could help students develop as leaders. Mentoring is a practice that emphasizes both individual performance and organizational effectiveness (Day, 2001). According to Day (2001) the benefits of this approach is that it blends assessment, challenge and support, all of which are necessary for leadership development. Mentoring can have both individual and organizational impact (Deans, Oakley, James, & Wrigley, 2006). According to Deans et al (2006) individuals who received mentoring for leadership roles related that amidst other benefits mentoring stimulates “energy, to help move

forward in moments when you feel stuck” (p. 18). Additionally, mentoring may contribute to individuals having higher self-esteem and demonstrate more positive behaviour.

Retreats

Retreats can be a method through which leadership development facilitators get students to recognize their potential. Retreats can provide a platform for goal setting and soul searching. It is a common leadership developmental approach that can be flexible and tailored to suit the organization’s needs. It can also be designed to facilitate interactive exchange of ideas among participants, thereby developing listening and communication skills. The participants in this research referred to their retreats as a time that they took to reflect and communicate about complex organizational issues.

Action Learning

Action learning can be used to facilitate experiential activities. It encourages leaders to reflect on how to make connections, and through this process, enhances their skills of analyzing seemingly contradicting data (Marquardt, 2000, Revans, 1998). In action learning, groups are facilitated through an inquiry process where they are given actual organizational problems to solve. They engage in problem analysis, data collection, data categorization, and subsequent development of strategies (Marquardt, 2000). Critical reflection and dialogue facilitate the process of reframing analysis and strategies developed to solve the problems leaders encounter. Action learning is akin to creating a micro-world of actual organizational issues and then allowing leaders to try new things, stretch their thinking, tolerate imperfections, and trust themselves.

Program Outcomes

The leadership development program needs stated or specific outcomes in order to give it focus and credibility. The stated or specific outcomes that I suggest are based on a synthesis of the data which suggested the kind of leadership participants in the study demonstrated and hoped for. I submit that the program model, if undergirded by the principles of “being,” “learning,” and “doing,” could create leaders that are servants, appreciative, emotional, ethical, and transformational.

Servant Leaders

The servant leader believes in serving others first. The motivation of a servant leader is to satisfy the needs and the priorities of those they lead. Ultimately, the servant leader aims to enhance the lives of people and the communities in which they belong (Greenleaf, 1977)

Appreciative Leaders

The appreciative leader is passionate about finding ways to actively engage people in working on issues that affect their organizations. Appreciative leaders mobilize creative potential and engage individuals in positive dialogue to create the worlds they most desire (Whitney et al, 2010).

Emotional leaders

The emotional leader addresses the needs of the follower and displays a positive mental attitude. Research on the role of emotions in leadership suggests that emotional leaders promote group solidarity and morale by creating shared emotional experiences (Humphrey, 2002).

Ethical leaders

The ethical leader promotes psychological capacities and a positive climate to foster

greater self-awareness. Ethical leaders foster the development of authenticity in their followers through increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modeling (Ciulla, 1996; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005)

Transformational Leaders

Essentially, the transformational view of leadership dictates that “the function of leadership is to engage followers, not merely to activate them, to commingle needs and aspirations and goals in a common enterprise and in the process make better citizens of both leaders and followers” (Burns, 1978, p. 461). Importantly, transformational leaders do not emphasize authority and control. Rather, they recognize the importance of the followers, as well as their goals.

Summary

The objective of the research was to inform the creation of a leadership development program that was based on Graduate Student Leaders’ voices and that reflected a fundamentally positive process in leadership development. Based on the participants’ perspectives, I proposed a model for a leadership development program. I called this model the “Being,” “Learning,” and “Doing.” It outlines the skeletal elements of leadership development which included the skills and attitudes that are necessary for effective leadership, course components, facilitator’s tasks, and program outcomes. I also utilized previous research findings on leadership development to substantiate my argument that the domains presented and their specified components of interest are relevant for positive and effective leadership. I submit that this model is emergent and as such, may be refined. It is my conviction that intentional leadership development among students in Higher Education would have a catalytic effect of creating a promise cadre of future

leaders; it is therefore my hope that my model could be used as a starting point for structuring a leadership development program at the participants' institution or elsewhere.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECAPITULATION AND REFLECTION

This inquiry was a case study that used elements of Appreciative Inquiry to examine Graduate Students' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, and their conceptualizations of leadership development. This chapter presents a summary of the inquiry by reviewing the context of the inquiry, the purpose of the inquiry and the methodology used. I also present conclusions, reflections, and recommendations for future research.

Recap of the Inquiry

The idea for this study emerged out of the recognition of the need for varied ways of understanding the phenomenon of leadership and for varied approaches to leadership development. Research on student leadership and student leadership development programmes is quite extensive. However, based on a review of the literature, only a few studies focus on leadership from the students' perspective and fewer still emphasize the positive experience of student leaders. I undertook this study of leadership and leadership development with the objective of creating a framework for a leadership development program that is congruent with students' perceptions of positive, life affirming concepts of leadership and leadership development.

Given that leadership is an emergent, socially constructed phenomenon, a qualitative research methodology was the most suitable to conduct this inquiry. Wright (2003) stated that qualitative research can provide a "rich, full picture of a research situation" (p. 8). I, therefore, engaged in such an experience to enter into the world of the participants in order to understand their perceptions of positive leadership, as well as the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. The research genre was a case study. It allowed for an exploration of a

“bounded” system through detailed, in-depth data collection. I employed the case study design in order to gain in-depth understanding of the leadership phenomenon and the meaning that is ascribed to it by those involved. The participant sample comprised five Graduate Student Leaders from a university in a western Canadian province, who were actively involved in leadership in their student organization at the time of data collection. The method for data collection was semi-structured appreciative individual and appreciative focus group interviews. Appreciative interviews and appreciative focus group were used in order to allow focus on strengths and successes.

I engaged in a systematic analysis of the data in order to interpret the participants’ responses on leadership and leadership development. Data analysis techniques included open coding which involved reading and re-reading transcripts, and commenting on the data by making notations in the margins of the transcripts, underlining, highlighting, and questioning responses. After this process, a preliminary list of codes and themes was created. The second phase was category construction. Category construction was facilitated by projecting insightful excerpts from the transcripts on huge colour coded cartridge papers. I refer to this process as *colour coding*. I then engaged in in-depth examination of my data by cross referencing, questioning, and making connections. I refer to this process as *data mapping*. The process of *data mapping* led to the formulation of meaningful concepts.

The final phase was the interpretive phase, in which I reviewed descriptions, themes, and categories. This phase was also facilitated by the the use of an interpretation panel that aided in arriving at possible conclusions and elaborated on my initial interpretations. The process of data analysis led to key findings which were further used to build a conceptual framework for a

leadership development program for the participants' organization at their university or elsewhere.

Overview of the Findings

Participants' perceptions of leadership revealed four categories. These categories were leadership as "being," leadership as "learning," and leadership as "doing," and a "quas-hierarchical" leadership perspective. The category of leadership as "being" revealed themes that demonstrated that leadership was considered positive when it was emotional, relational, inclusive, and collaborative. Importantly, the expressions of emotions were not strategies or manipulations to gain support from constituents but were ends in themselves. Additionally, leadership appropriated other intelligibilities such as relationships, care, positive affect, engagement, and community building.

The leadership as "learning" category reflected fundamentally new ways of acting and thinking and reinforced existing leadership behaviours. This category reflected the participants' tolerance for ambiguity, and their belief in the importance of listening to, as well as appreciating dissenting voices without the press for consensus. The leadership as "learning" category projected leadership as an essentially transformational experience where participants were learning, understanding, and valuing the worth and potential within themselves and others.

The leadership as "doing" category presented evidence that participants had a desire to make a difference in leadership. They demonstrated how they invested their personal power in a way that provided happiness and satisfaction for others and at the same time brought about the best in their selves. Getting students accommodation, organizing events, creating an atmosphere of family were micro acts that contributed to the larger purpose of enhancing graduate students' experiences and added to the quality of graduate students scholarly lives.

Finally, a “quasi-hierarchical” perspective of leadership emerged. Though the participants’ perspectives of leadership appeared to be one of shared leadership and shared decision making, collaboration, and teamwork when it came to some critical decisions, they refused to let go of the old-industrial era model of a top–down structure. The leadership boundaries became vital and the placing of responsibility for action and decision-making in the purview of the head leader became critical.

The findings for research question two, “How do Graduate Student Leaders conceptualize leadership development?” suggest that the participants perceived leadership development as interplay between self-development and institutional initiatives. The notion of self-development was undergirded by the principles of Emotional Intelligence previously discussed in Chapter Two. Understanding the self as a leader essentially entailed possessing self-knowledge and being able to self-manage. Self-knowledge referred to the ability to understand the core of one’s being or finding one’s own voice or “essence.” Self-management referred to the leader’s acute awareness of his or her skills and his or her place in the leadership relationship. The participants also reflected that effective self-management in leadership refers to a leader’s capacity to manage emotions such as anger, and to articulate dissenting opinions. However, the maturing of oneself as a leader required a combination of leadership education, leadership opportunity, skill development, and experiential learning.

Summary of Findings for Research Question One

1. Positive leadership resides in the confluence of “being,” “learning,” and “doing.” It is a co-active process in which expressing emotions, receiving affirmations, acquiring new knowledge, and producing life affirming results act as a force for elevated performance.

2. Leadership is an emotional process whereby leaders gain knowledge of followers' emotions through listening, appraising, and expressing authentic care.
3. Positive leadership experiences are framed around collective and interactive efforts to build interpersonal relationships in the community in which the leadership process was taking place.
4. The expression of emotions in leadership enhances the leadership relationship and acts as an energizing and actualizing force in personal development.
5. Empathy is a fundamental leadership strength that can yield multiple interrelated benefits such as the facilitation of individual growth and social connections.
6. Positive affirmation as a leadership practice allows for the building up and motivation of individuals' potentials and personal belief in individuals' abilities.
7. Leadership is the continuous, ongoing process of building relationships, identifying goals, and improving situations.
8. The listening leader creates a sense of psychological safety where individuals feel free to express uncertainty, confusion, and communicate without fear.
9. The old construct of the hierarchical notion of the "man at the top" lingers and functions as a predictor of leadership success.

Summary of Findings for Research Question Two

1. Leadership development is self-development. Leadership development and self-development are inextricably linked and understanding oneself as a leader involves the reflexive process of understanding oneself as a person.
2. Leadership development is interplay between self-development and institutional initiatives.

3. Leadership development entails an aggressive and interminable search for one's "essence" or one's passions.
4. Critical to developing the self as a leader is an understanding of one's preferences, values, and worldviews. Values and worldviews become the "internal standard" that guides leadership behaviours.

Summary of Findings for Research Question Three: The "Being," "Learning" and "Doing" Leadership Development Model

The objective of this study was to provide a framework for leadership development that was primarily based on how students perceive and understand leadership and leadership development. What resulted was an integrated and unique program model that shows that post-industrial concepts of leadership as well as the newer concepts embedded in Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Organizational Scholarship, and Emotional Intelligence formed the participants' perceptions. The "Being," "Learning" and "Doing" model, therefore, responds to the third research question which asked: "How might Graduate Student Leaders' perceptions of leadership and leadership development form the core of student leadership development and training?" This model also completes the conceptual framework presented in Chapter One and has, therefore, added to the literature as it presents a possibility for the creation of a student leadership development program that is representative of the students' perceptive of leadership and leadership development. Figure 7.1 represents the completed conceptual framework.

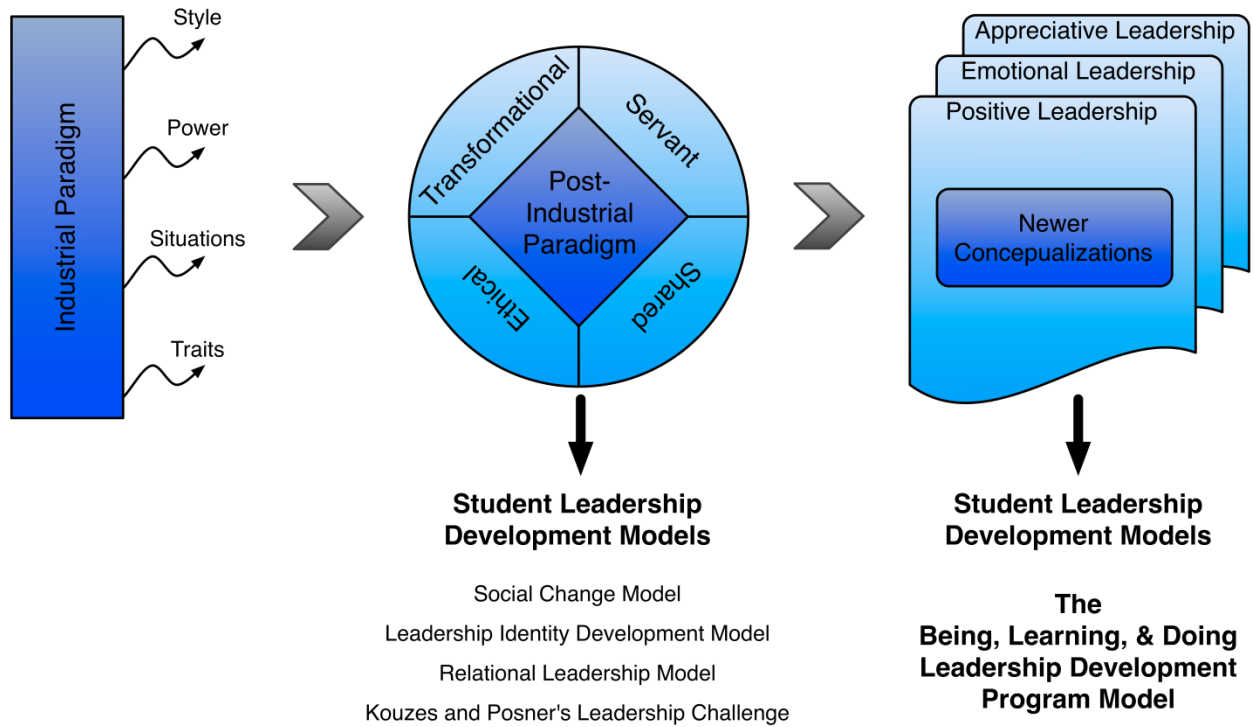


Figure 7.1: The conceptual framework completed: Leadership and student leadership development programs

Adopting or adapting the core elements presented in the “Being,” “Learning,” and “Doing” leadership development framework to student leadership development training can result in a program that is knowledge-rich, relationally inclusive, and self-empowering. I conclude that the “Being,” “Learning” and “Doing” model has the potential to create strength building elements in individuals and organizations such as empathy, collaboration, humility, respectful encounters, integrity, and positive affect.

Methodological Reflections

I took time to think about how the methodology that I employed in this study has both reshaped and reaffirmed my views on leadership. Notably, through the use of appreciative interviews there was an energy that created impactful and fulfilling discussions that may not have occurred otherwise. By its very nature the appreciative process invites people into positive

dialogue and moves discussion beyond mere problem solving level to the aspiration, envisioning, and big picture thinking processes.

Importantly, the Appreciative Inquiry methodology encouraged reflection, introspection, and facilitated participation that extended beyond the cognitive level. I would argue that the principles of the appreciative process are not just a way of *doing*, but also a way of *being*. Appreciative Inquiry allowed me to peer into the participants' souls, to connect with their inner self, to bring to the fore their emotional capacity.

The participants expressed how enriching and rewarding the experience was because they had an opportunity to freely talk about the things that were going well in their organization. This view corresponds to that of Whitney et al (2010) who engaged in a series of appreciative interviews and concluded that "positive power is something everyone implicitly wants; yet few have an explicit framework for talking about it, doing it, or being it" (p. xxi). This study created that framework for talking about "positive power" as it presented the space for individuals to share exemplary leadership thoughts, practices, and beliefs in their own words. This experience was liberating for them, as they felt they were able to express their strengths, not for votes or recognition, but for the sake of expressing. Their appreciative interviews uncovered the participants' intrinsic involvement in the students' concerns and showed how much they valued collaboration, interdependence, and connectivity. Appreciative Inquiry, therefore gave voice to exceptionally positive states which may have otherwise remained unheard. Based on this experience, I submit that we need to deliberately engage appreciative processes so as to enhance our capacity to create leaders who articulate optimistic organizational relations, and an appreciation of self and others.

The focus on a case study provided the space to get an in-depth understanding of leadership and leadership development. By dialoguing with individuals who were in the same group and had the same purpose, I was able to capture the collaborative leadership experience. The small group of participants also provided the space to build relationships and to treat the researched not just as providers of data, but rather as individuals who were learning about themselves through thoughtful reflection and emergent conversations. The focus group session created even more collaboration as participants were encouraged to talk to one another, and comment on each other's perspectives and experience. Moreover, crucial to this particular case, was the intimate knowledge that the participants' possessed of each other. They were able to illuminate each other's strengths, offer intensive description of their collaborative actions, and identify shared visions and values.

The use of an interpretation panel was valuable. It enabled meaningful discussions, created the opportunity for fresh insights, provided the space for individuals' to challenge assumptions, and most importantly, enabled me to think more critically about my own assumptions and beliefs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this research and the methodology that I employed, I suggest that further studies on the positive and emotional dimension of leadership could be done with a larger more diverse group of student leaders. Additionally, other scholars could consider examining student leaders' perspectives of their leadership performances, values, and visions as well as their followers' views of the same. The aim of such a study would be to examine whether the leaders' perceptions and the followers perceptions coalesce or diverge.

To enhance student leadership practices in the university, in particular, and in the society in general a model that reflects students' understanding of positive leadership needs to be implemented and evaluated. Therefore, I suggest that the framework of a leadership development program that was presented would benefit from further scrutiny, refinement or retooling. After such processes, it could be implemented and research could be done to examine the extent to which this program identifies, develops, and nurtures emerging leaders.

Future research may examine how student leaders' emotional capacities such as empathy, care, and positive affirmation are perceived by others. For example, how does emphasis on empathy affect a students' ability to lead and motivate others? Or how does a lack of these intelligibilities affect students' ability to motivate others to participate in student related college activities.

Finally, scholars may seek to conduct research into students' developmental levels for emotional capacities. That is, are some emotional capacities more common to a particular stage in a student's life, their experiences, or the nature of their leadership tasks? Are the notions of transformation, community building, and engagement more evident in individuals who are mature in their leadership experiences? A research of this nature may provide rich findings to the student leadership development literature. Helping students to understand the level or the place that they operate from in their leadership will make them become more self-aware and better facilitate the reflective process of leadership development.

Personal Reflections

My experience in conducting this study was similar to Daanan Parry's (1991) analogy of the trapeze (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWvV5N4hOGc>). Danaan Parry said,

Sometimes I feel that my life is a series of trapeze swings. I'm either hanging on to a trapeze bar swinging along or, for a few moments in my life, I'm hurtling across space in between trapeze bars. Most of the time, I spend my life hanging on for dear life to my trapeze-bar-of-the-moment. It carries me along at a certain steady rate of swing and I have the feeling that I'm in control of my life. I know most of the right questions and even some of the answers. But every once in a while as I'm merrily (or even not-so-merrily) swinging along, I look out ahead of me into the distance and what do I see? I see another trapeze bar swinging toward me. It's empty and I know, in that place in me that knows, that this new trapeze bar has my name on it. It is my next step, my growth, my aliveness coming to get me. In my heart of hearts I know that, for me to grow, I must release my grip on this present, well-known bar and move to the new one (Parry, 1991).

Like Danaan Parry's analogy, I found that at each phase of this study, from proposal preparation to dissertation completion was filled with moments of trepidation, when I thought that I would not make it to the end of a chapter, moments of jubilation when I actually completed a chapter, and moments of apprehension when it was time to start another chapter. For me, each chapter was a trapeze swing. The writing of each represented a new challenge, a new journey into some unknown. Each chapter required a different skill, a renewed mind set, and even different writing locations. I found myself unable to concentrate in the location in which I had written Chapter Four when it was time to write Chapter Five. I realised that I had to reposition my thoughts at every new beginning in order not to remain fixed in the mode of thinking that generated previous responses and interpretations.

My most challenging moments came at the end of each chapter. I knew that I had to release my grip, to move on to the next step but I found it difficult to let go. This was due in part

to the fear of starting another chapter, and in part to the romance I developed in writing the previous. Though experience had always shown that the next chapter offered more insight and awareness, and added to the richness of my experience, it was just never enough to allow for a smooth release of the previous chapter.

On reflection, I realize that the “in-betweens” (the ending and beginning of each chapter) or what Parry referred to as “transition zones” were “incredibly rich spaces.” It was during these phases that I engaged in critical reflection, consistently questioning whether or not what I wrote and was about to write made sense, was coherent, and cogent or was truly reflective of the experience I had in the field. These were the moments that I was most alive, most confident, and most vulnerable.

My experience in writing this dissertation was incongruent with the popular notion that engaging in an activity over a period of time becomes progressively easier. For me, it was progressively more difficult, as I found myself wanting to raise the level of my writing and deepen my conceptual understanding at every turn. While writing this dissertation, I questioned myself more than ever before throughout this process. My days begun and ended with an introspection of all that I wrote and was about to write. It was a process that required intense focus, quiet times for reading and rereading the data so as to allow myself to hear the voices of the participants, to remember their gestures, their laughs, the expressions on their faces, and their quiet deliberating moments. Constantly focussing on my experience in the field kept me connected to the “reality” or the “life” of my participants’ experiences.

I kept closeness, a personal closeness to writing this dissertation, not only because it was a reflection of who I am but also because I was eager and committed to represent my participants as who they are. I believe that their thoughts are powerful and imminently transformative. Their

voices are worth listening to and are worth being taken seriously. I believe there is deep wisdom in their perceptions. Indeed, Simone's expression of her leadership utopia, if actualized may create a world that is essentially positive, relational, and collaborative. There is hope for this yet because thoughts, once articulated, are boundary less and borderless.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Introductory texts

Thank you for being willing to share your experiences and perceptions of leadership with me. I am very excited about this research and feel especially privileged to be interacting with you. Together, we will be talking about your involvement in your leadership and exploring the aspects of leadership that you deem most positive. Additionally, we will be discussing your views on student leadership development. Your stories will help researchers and educators to learn how students perceive leadership and what leadership means to students, especially at your level. I will be asking you several questions that will help us to discover that. Feel free to stop me at any time as we interact.

Stage Setting Questions

- 1. How long have you been involved in student leadership?**
- 2. What does it feel like being a student leader?**

Core Interview Questions: Individual Interviews

1. Identify a time in your experience as a student leader when you felt most effective and engaged. Describe this. How did you feel? What made this situation possible?
2. What is your value to your student organization? In what ways do you contribute your best?
What are your strengths?
3. Tell me a story about an experience, an initiative, or circumstance that seems to have really enabled college or university students in their leadership maturity. Perhaps, the experience

powerfully enabled them to exercise leadership. For you, the story is an example of the best practice of leadership development in the lives of students.

4. What do you appreciate most about your organization? In what ways does it excel?
5. What are the three or four most important aspirations for the future of your organization?
What kind of leadership do you think is necessary for these aspirations to be realized?
6. When you think of a leadership development program for university students, what are the core things that come to mind?
7. Describe a leader who has influenced you. What did that person do? How did that person interact with you? Describe some specific instances in which you experienced this influence.
8. Think of a time when you felt especially creative in your leadership. Describe what you were doing, what you were thinking, and what you were feeling.
9. Tell me about a peak experience as a student leader. What was it about your situation, organization, colleagues, or yourself that enabled this to occur?
10. What are the things that you have done as an organization that help to build the capacity of other student leaders or aspiring student leaders?
12. If you had three wishes for the organization what would they be.....

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Tell me a story about an experience that you've had as a group when leadership was demonstrated in an extraordinary way. This might be a story about when you felt the most engaged and energized through some leadership effort. For you, the story illustrates the best leadership you've ever experienced.
2. As you reflect on your own leadership experiences since becoming members of this organization, in what contexts have you learned the most about how to collaborate (work

together) across differences? (These differences or boundaries may have been across sectors, departments, race, gender, age, or something else.) What were you trying to accomplish by working together? What challenges did you encounter? How did you seek to address those challenges? What did you learn about leading across differences from your experiences?

3. What do you think are the most important competencies (e.g., capacities, behaviors, attitudes, and ways of being) that leaders need in order to work successfully across differences/boundaries?
4. What are things that helped you help you strengthen these competencies?
5. What would support you and others to develop these capacities, behaviors, attitudes and ways of being?
6. What has contributed to your maturity as leaders?
7. What does it take to reach a high level of excellence in leadership?
8. How do you impact the public, the students as leaders?

Concluding Questions

- 1. How was this interviewing experience?**
- 2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?**

Summary Sheets

Quick Action Sheets

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Individual Interview Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This consent form represents your voluntary participation in the study, Appreciative Voices on Leadership and Leadership Development.

This project was reviewed on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioral Science Research Board on

_____. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Research Ethics Office toll free at 1-888-966-2975 or

ethics.office@usask.ca

Project Title: Appreciative Voices on Leadership and Leadership Development

Researcher: Taneisha Ingleton, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.

Supervisor: Dr. Michelle Prytula, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.

Purpose and Objective of the Research

The purpose of this study is to examine Graduate Students' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. The objective is to arrive at concepts of exceptional leadership that may be used to inform change strategies and to develop a formal leadership development program for student leaders.

Procedures

The methodology that will be used is Appreciative Inquiry which focuses on the best of *what is or might be* in organization. As a result, your conversations with the researcher are to uncover what you perceive to be your best leadership experiences and concepts of good leaders and leadership. Therefore, we are requesting approximately one hour of your time to discuss your perceptions of exceptional leadership and your experiences of positive leadership and leadership development. **The interviews will be recorded and you are free to request that the recording device be turned off at any time during the interview process. After your interview and prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as you see fit. The interviews will be recorded with an audiotape device.**

Potential Benefits

The benefit to you personally is the possibility that your own thinking regarding leadership and leadership development would be stimulated. The dialogical approach to the study may also allow you to generate new and more positive visions.

Right to Withdraw

As a participant you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with verbal indication that that is what you desire. The data you have given to that point will be deleted from the study. The data obtained from the interview will be used in an anonymous and confidential manner. After the transcription of the data into electronic format, the participant will view the data and sign a data release form. Your anonymity will not be compromised. The data from the research will be securely stored at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of 5 years.

Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply only until 15 days after you have signed the data release form. After this, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

Confidentiality

The data from the research will be used in a dissertation for the Ph. D. degree at the University of Saskatchewan. **However, although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent form will be stored separately from other data or information received from participants, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses.** Further use of the data could come in the form of journal articles or conference presentations. No data for publications or papers will identify you as a participant.

Personal Information

If you have any further questions regarding the study or regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact: Taneisha Ingleton, Ed. Adm., University of Saskatchewan (306-966-7017 or tai882@mail.usask.ca) or Dr. Michelle Prytula, Ed. Adm., University of Saskatchewan (or [michelle.prytula @usask.ca](mailto:michelle.prytula@usask.ca)). By signing below you acknowledge that the study and contents of the consent have been explained to you, that you understand the consent form, that you agree to participate in the study, and that you will comply with issues of confidentiality and integrity of the research process. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

APPENDIX C

Data/Transcript Release Form

Taneisha Ingleton, University of Saskatchewan

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate, I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my interview with Taneisha Ingleton. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Taneisha Ingleton to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____	_____
Participant	Date
_____	_____
Participant	Date

APPENDIX D

Consent Form for Focus Group Interview Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the focus group interview for this study. This consent form represents your voluntary participation in the study, Appreciative Voices on Leadership and Leadership Development. This project was reviewed on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioral Science Research Board on _____. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Research Ethics Office toll free at 1-888-966-2975 or ethics.office@usask.ca

Project Title: Appreciative Voices on Leadership and Leadership Development.

Researcher: Taneisha Ingleton, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.

Supervisor: Dr. Michelle Prytula, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.

Purpose and Objective of the Research

The purpose of this study is to examine Graduate Students' perceptions of their most positive leadership experiences, unearth what gives life to their leadership, and to identify the ways in which they conceptualize leadership development. The objective is to arrive at concepts of exceptional leadership that may be used to inform change strategies and to develop a formal leadership development program for student leaders.

Procedures

The methodology that will be used is Appreciative Inquiry which focuses on the best of *what is or might be* in organization. As a result, your conversations with the researcher are to uncover what you perceive to be your best leadership experiences and concepts of good leaders and leadership. Therefore, we are requesting approximately one hour of your time to discuss your perceptions of exceptional leadership and your experiences of positive leadership and leadership development. The interviews will be recorded and you are free to request that the recording device be turned off at any time during the interview process. After your interview and prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as you see fit. The interviews will be recorded with an audiotape device.

Potential Benefits

The benefit to you personally is the possibility that your own thinking regarding leadership and leadership development would be stimulated. The dialogical approach to the study may also allow you to generate new and more positive visions.

Right to Withdraw

As a participant you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with verbal indication that that is what you desire. The data you have given to that point will be deleted from the study. The data obtained from the interview will be used in an anonymous and confidential manner. After the transcription of the data into electronic format, the participant will view the data and sign a data release form. The data from the interview will be securely stored at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of 5 years. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply only until 15 days after you have signed the data release form. After this, it is

possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

Confidentiality

The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside of the group and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality. The data from the research will be used in a dissertation for the Ph. D. degree at the University of Saskatchewan. However, although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent form will be stored separately from other data or information received from the participant, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. Further use of the data could come in the form of journal articles or conference presentations. No data for publications or papers will identify you as a participant.

Personal Information

If you have any further questions regarding the study or regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact: Taneisha Ingleton, Ed. Adm., University of Saskatchewan (306-966-7017 or tai882@mail.usask.ca) or Dr. Michelle Prytula, Ed. Adm., University of Saskatchewan (or michelle.prytula @usask.ca). By signing below you acknowledge that the study and contents of the consent have been explained to you, that you understand the consent form, that you agree to participate in the study, and that you will comply

with issues of confidentiality and integrity of the research process. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

APPENDIX E

Email Correspondence

Dear executive members,

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education in the department of Educational Administration. I am conducting research into the positive core of student leadership or what gives life to student leadership. The topic of my research is Appreciative Voices on Leadership and Leadership Development. I am interested in finding out what is student leadership like when it is at its best and how might these experiences foster the creation of a student leadership development program.

I would be pleased if you could facilitate my research in accommodating me to interview you on these issues. I am requesting individual and focus group interviews for this study. Participation in any of the interviews is voluntary. Your participation in either the individual or focus group interview would involve two sessions, each of which is approximately 30 minutes. I would appreciate a response if you think you will be able to facilitate my research.

For more information about this study please contact Dr. Michelle Prytula, Department of Educational Administration at 306- 966-7514 or email michelle.prytula @usak.ca. This study has been reviewed by, and received approval through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan. Thank you. Looking forward to your favourable response.

Taneisha Ingleton

Doctoral Candidate

Department of Educational Administration

University of Saskatchewan.

APPENDIX F

Data Analysis Process – Hanging Data

